

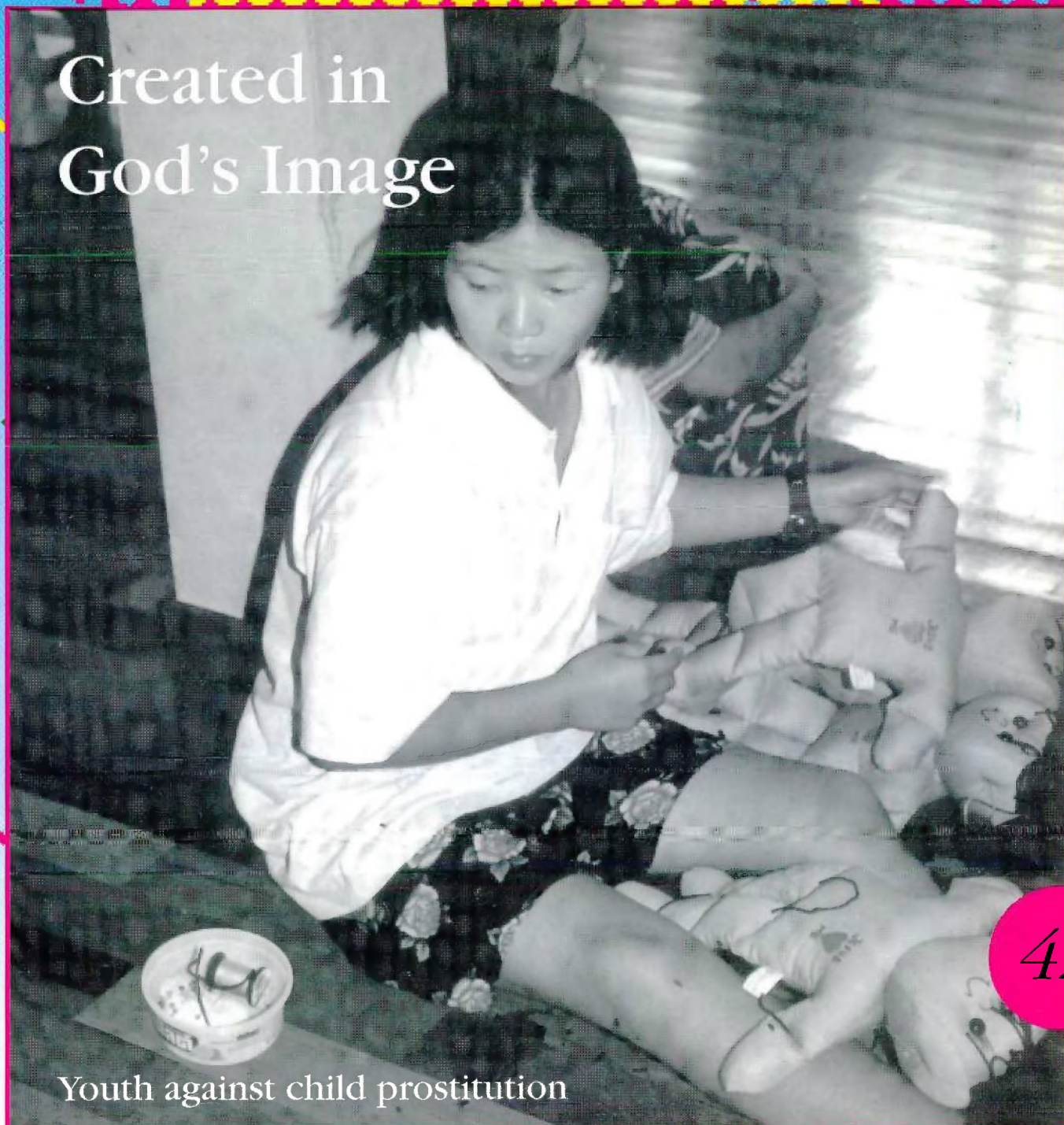
Lutheran World Federation

november 1997

Youth

m a g a z i n e

Created in
God's Image



Youth against child prostitution

42



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Caption: Residents of the New Life Center in Chiang Mai, Thailand, produce dolls to make money for personal necessities and to send food home to their families.

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WHAT IS COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN?

The commercial sexual exploitation of children is a fundamental violation of children's rights. It comprises sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third party person or persons. The child is treated as a sexual object and as a commercial object. The commercial sexual exploitation of children constitutes a form of coercion and violence against children, and amounts to forced labor and a contemporary form of slavery.

Declaration of the World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children



FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Friends!

Created in God's image—this Bible passage from Genesis 1:27 came to my mind when I saw a young woman "creating" a doll in the New Life Center, Chiang Mai, Thailand. The reason why the girls in this center are engaged in this type of production is a very pragmatic one. Through their donors abroad they sell the dolls to raise funds and also advertise the project from which they benefit. The

New Life Center aims at preventing child prostitution, a widely spread phenomenon in Thailand. We visited the center during the LWF Human Rights Visit to Thailand 23–28 June 1997—a program of the LWF's Department for Mission and Development Youth Desk. The Human Rights Visit is the focus of this issue of *Youth* magazine.

Seeing how this young woman models with her hands an image of something human brought a clear and strong message to my mind: Look, I am created in God's image. That is the first thing to be seen and realized when looking at me. You and I, both of us are created in the same image of God. Nothing gives you the right to buy or sell me. I also belong to God as you belong to God.

The message we want to send out by publishing stories about our trip to northern Thailand is a very simple one: We *can* do something. Child prostitution is not just a sad fact of our contemporary world.



*Ondrej Prostředník
LWF/DMD Secretary for Youth in Church and Society
and the "perfect steward"
LWF Ninth Assembly, Hong Kong 8–16 July 1997*

It is a social evil that can be prevented by establishing social and economic justice, and through education. By education, we mean not only the education of victims but also of those who travel to developing countries seeking the services of the sex industry. A number of organizations are working in the field of prevention very effectively. We can join our efforts and work together toward change.

Of course, in this issue we cannot omit the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference in Bangkok (28 June–5 July 1997). Many of you who read our magazine participated in that meeting. We have included just a few stories to bring the spirit of the meeting to those of you who were not able to attend. We have learned that it is a great gift and a wonderful feeling to belong to a worldwide communion of Lutheran churches.

But, at the same time, we also have realized how difficult it is to communicate with each other, how different are our contexts and how different are our expectations from such a meeting.

Bangkok has taught us a good lesson in what it means to build a communion. I hope that most of us left the conference

with a strong commitment to continue building up the communion of Lutheran churches in the future.

At the Youth Desk it will be our task to look for ways how to support young people in our member churches in their commitment to the "Lutheran World Communion"—a title which some participants suggested should replace "Lutheran World Federation." After all it is us, the young generation of today, who—after the fiftieth anniversary celebrated this year—are expected to lead the LWF to its 100th anniversary. We had better take up this challenge and start to work for a glorious celebration in fifty years to come. Otherwise, there will be no LWF to celebrate.

Sincerely,

Ondrej



LWF HUMAN RIGHTS VISIT TO BANGKOK AND NORTHERN THAILAND 23-28 JUNE 1997

By Anna-Karin Moden (formerly Berglund)
LWF Youth Intern (November 1996-July 1997)

At the end of June this year, the LWF Department for Mission and Development Youth Desk arranged a Human Rights Visit to Bangkok and northern Thailand. The visit was arranged in connection with the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference (PAYC) in Bangkok. The fourteen participants, who came from Africa, Asia, Europe and from North and South America, learned about the problem of commercial sexual exploitation of children in Thailand. The aim of the program was not only to inform the participants about the mechanisms and background of the sex industry in Thailand but, also to point out that sexual exploitation of children is a worldwide problem. Another important part of the program was to learn about possible ways to prevent children from entering into prostitution. After being introduced to the problem in Bangkok during an intensive day of lectures and a visit to Patpong, the city's largest red-light district, the group traveled to the north of Thailand to visit programs and centers working on the prevention of prostitution. The trip to the north was arranged by ECPAT-End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes. A guide from the organization traveled with the group.

What were you like when you were fifteen years old? What did you dream about and hope for? Max Ediger, who has been fighting the evils of the sex trade in children for several years, asked our group these questions when we met him in a conference room in a Bangkok hotel. We had invited him and Patricia Green, who runs a center for girls and women who work in prostitution, to tell us about the workings and background of the sex industry in Thailand.

We had read reports and other material on the issue before we came but nothing could have prepared us to hear the stories about young children trapped in brothels, girls who have been sold so many times that they can't remember where they come from, or to meet the empty eyes of the bar girls waiting for a customer. The Human Rights Visit was a study of evil, and of human cruelty. But, we also discovered a strong will among many people to change the situation. Many organizations as well as the Thai

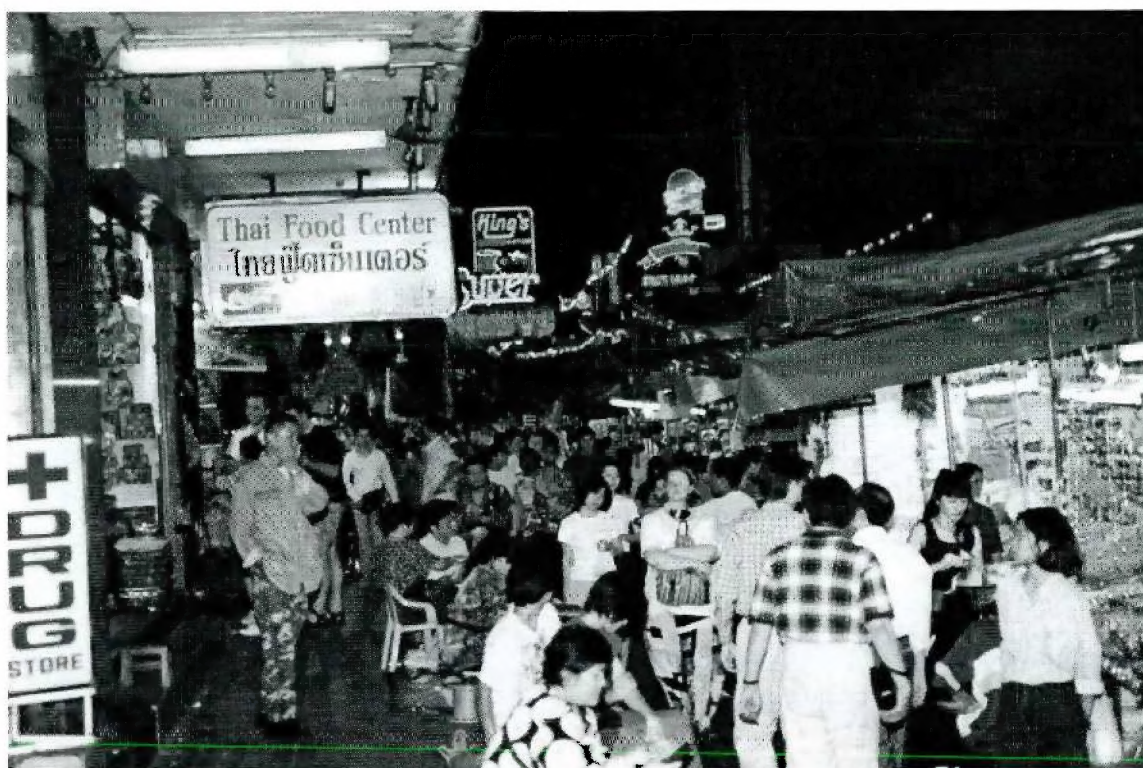
government are making efforts to curb the sex trade, to educate children and find alternatives to prostitution and the drug trade, problems which are closely related, as a means of support. Village headmen and other local leaders also are beginning to fight back and have started campaigns against the agents who recruit children to brothels.

Prostitution is illegal in Thailand but, even so, 2.5 million women and female children are involved in prostitution. Of them, 800,000 are under the age of eighteen and 30,000 are under fifteen, according to children's rights groups in Thailand. The country has become a popular destination for sex tourists and pedophiles, the majority from Western countries. With the spread and fear of HIV/AIDS, the demand for younger girls, who are considered to be safer and less likely to be infected, has increased. According to widespread popular belief in Asia, sex with young girls is rejuvenating. Prostitution is not confined to the major cities or big tourist spots.

There are brothels at truck stops, markets and small villages all across Thailand. That men visit prostitutes has been common in Thai society for centuries.

ONE NIGHT IN PATPONG

Four stories up from the crowded street, where fake watches, cheap T-shirts and sex are equally easy to come by, Rahab Ministries has its beauty salon. Here, the women who work in the area's many discos, bars and massage parlors can get their hair and makeup done before they start the evening's work. The staff also tells the women about Jesus, and about Christian values and beliefs. Christianity is a small religion in Thailand which is mainly Buddhist. Christians make up about one percent of the population of 60 million. Four thousand women work in Patpong. Patricia Green, who came to Thailand from New Zealand as a missionary, and two Thai women started Rahab Ministries to try to address the needs of the women of Patpong.



Patpong at night – Bangkok's largest red-light district

We don't want to pass judgement or condemn the women but try to help and support them," Patricia says. The Rahab workers visit the women in the bars, talk to them and hand out flowers as a sign of friendship. At the center, they provide health and sex education. Rahab also offers sponsoring for education and vocational training to women who wish to leave prostitution and can help with money for their children's education. A prevention program with vocational training also is available for younger women who otherwise would become sex workers.

Rahab tries to attract the women by offering rates that are half of those of other salons. But it is not easy to get them to come to Rahab. They work in the evenings and at night and sleep during the day, many of them have children, and in Bangkok's hellish traffic the trip to work can take several hours. Traditionally, the oldest daughters are respon-

sible for supporting their families. They feel indebted to their parents for bringing them up and work very hard to be able to send money home to their parents and siblings.

"God is not money, a customer is," one woman once told Patricia Green. Many of the women also have very low self esteem, often feel they cannot trust anyone and can't believe that someone actually wants to help them without receiving anything in return.

Between twenty and thirty women come to Rahab every night. The support they receive there, both spiritual and practical, has given many the strength to leave prostitution and find other jobs. Some have continued on to Bible school. Others have returned to their villages.

When we visit Rahab, four girls are getting ready for the evening in the salon, giggling like any other teenagers. They seem interested in us and we try to talk to each other, using a little English

and our hands. We all watch when Rossina and Jessisca from our group have their lips painted bright red by the makeup artist.

In just a little while the girls will be out dancing in the bars, each of them with a number attached to her bikini bottom or revealing bathing suit, ready to be bought for the night by one of the men, both Thais and foreigners, who frequent the Patpong bars. The girls are stared at all night as they work. To make them feel comfortable at Rahab, Patricia asks the men in our group to stay in another room while we meet with them. Rahab is a place where they can relax, see friends and find someone who will listen to their problems. The hairdressers, who have close contact with the women and often get many questions, have attended special workshops about women in prostitution, human rights, the law and HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.



Rahab Ministries operates amid the neon lights of Patpong



Photo: Anna-Karin Moden [Berglund]

Getting ready for "work". Rahab Ministries beauty shop in Patpong, Bangkok, offers Christian counseling and personal support, together with hairdressing and makeup.



Rahab currently has a staff of ten. Many work without pay and sometimes volunteers come from abroad to work at Rahab for a few months. The cost of running Rahab is about USD 3,000 per month. The funds come from the Rahab newsletter and some fund-raising. The embassies of Germany, Australia and New Zealand also have helped with money and equipment. Every month, Patricia says, they pray that there will be enough money, and the money does come in.



Patricia Green, from New Zealand, in Thailand since 1987, currently runs the Rahab Ministries center in Patpong.

WIN'S STORY

Max Ediger, a Mennonite, who works for *Burma Issues* comes to tell us about how the sex industry in Thailand also affects women and children in Burma. The country is ruled by the military. His organization works to raise awareness about human rights violations in Burma under the

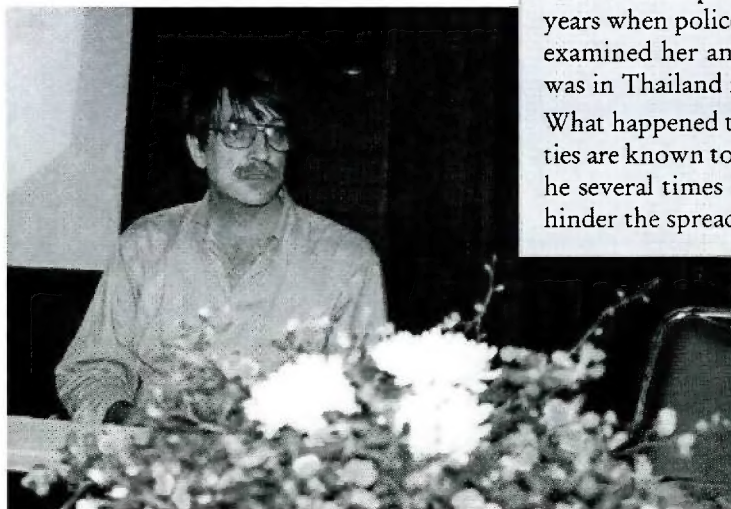
present military regime and tries to improve the situation. It acts at the grass-roots level in Burma to encourage human rights awareness among the village people, arranges adult literacy programs and provides training in the collection and reporting of human rights information.

Burma Issues also produces public information material such as reports and documentary films, publishes a monthly newsletter and maintains a database with documents related to Burma.

Max tells us the story of Win, a fifteen-year-old Burmese girl.

When the civil war came to Win's area, the military took several men in the village as porters, to carry their equipment. Win's father was forced to join them. To support the family, Win decided that she had to go to Thailand to find work. A Burmese woman took her across the border to the house of one of the head police officers in the city, Mae Sai. She saw how his wife gave money to the Burmese woman. Win was taken to Bangkok where she was forced to work in brothels. When she first refused to see customers she was raped and beaten. She had been in Bangkok for four years when police raided the brothel where she was kept. A doctor examined her and found that she was HIV-positive. Since Win was in Thailand illegally she was sent back to Burma.

What happened to her there is not known. The Burmese authorities are known to treat people with HIV very badly, and Max says he several times has heard about infected people being killed to hinder the spread of the disease.



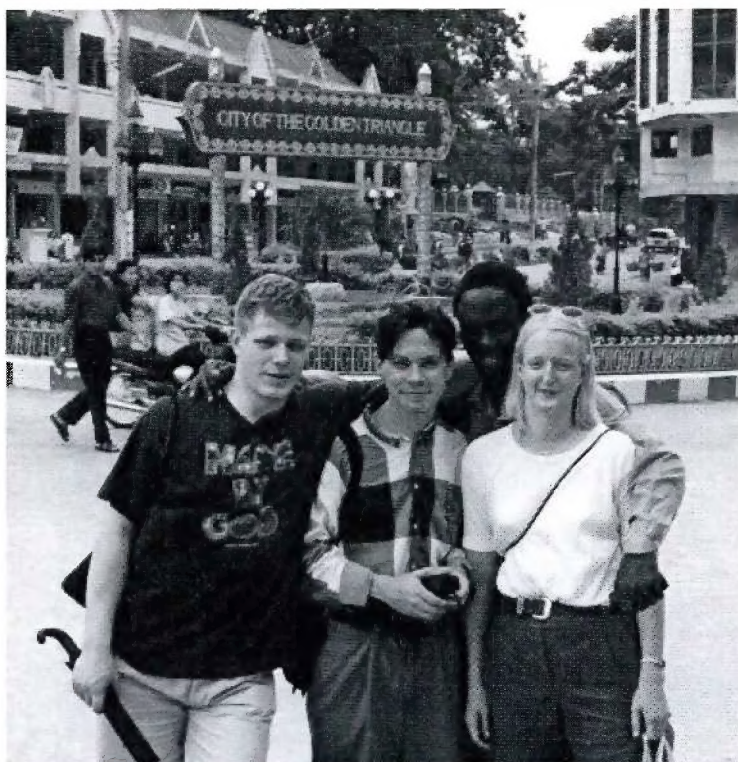
Max Ediger, a Mennonite from the United States, in Thailand since 1978, works for Burma Issues fighting for people's land rights.



Win's story is typical and is often repeated. Local human rights groups estimate that as many as 10,000 new Burmese women and female children are brought to Thailand each year.

Women and children who work in the Thai brothels also come from tribes in the north of the country or from neighboring Vietnam, Cambodia and China. Some have been sold by parents who believed the promises of jobs for their daughters. Some are too desperate to be able to resist the promises of the "agents" who travel around the villages to find girls to work in brothels. The agents, who are part of large networks, target families with economic difficulties, those who will be vulnerable to their enticing promises. Widespread corruption adds to the complexity of the problem. Village headmen, police officers and government officials often are involved in recruitment, transportation and in arranging the necessary documents. In some villages in the north there are almost no young girls, aged eleven and upward, left.

*Youth against
child
prostitution*



Terro (Finland), Marcus (Canada), Gabriel (Tanzania) and Anna-Karin (Sweden) in the City of the Golden Triangle on the Burmese (Myanmar) side of Mae Sai.

THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

Our trip to the north took us to Mae Sai, the same city which Win was taken to before she was sent to Bangkok. It is the northernmost city of Thailand, situated on the border with Burma. Mae Sai lies in the heart of the famous Golden Triangle, an area where drug trading has for a long time been one of the main sources of income. Many of the people in this area are addicted to opium and, increasingly, to heroin. When parents abuse drugs, they can no longer take care of their children, who may be forced to leave for a larger city to find work. Children are sometimes even sold to finance the parents' addiction. During a walk on the outskirts of Mae Sai early one morning, our group came face to face with the drug problem that we had heard so much about.

A group of men were sitting by the path injecting heroin into their arms, totally oblivious to us passing strangers.

A few hundred meters off of Mae Sai's dirty main road, lies the Development and Education Program for Daughters and Communities (DEPDC). It works with 450 girls in eight projects in Mae Sai and the province of Chiang Rai. By offering education, training in sewing and weaving, and through work with hill-tribe groups and lowland villages, the DEPDC, which is funded mainly by UNICEF, tries to prevent children from entering into the sex industry or child labor. Together with teachers and village leaders, the DEPDC workers identify girls considered to be especially vulnerable.



Entering the Development and Education Program center in Mae Sai. Most of the residents are animists. The gate is guarded by wooden figures to protect them from evil.

Girls with one or two drug-addicted parents, and orphans, are at risk of being forced or enticed into prostitution.

The girls at the center belong to the Akha hill tribe, they are not Thai. Many Akhas are animists, they believe in spirits. The center's gate is guarded by wooden figures to protect it from evil.

The girls, aged between thirteen and eighteen years, live on the grounds of the center, in huts built in the traditional way with bamboo roofs that go almost down to the ground. They cook their own food and do their own washing.

One evening, they prepared a show for us, danced traditional Akha dances and sang, dressed in beautifully embroidered traditional costumes in bright colors which they had made themselves.



Typical house in an Akha hill-tribe village, northern Thailand



Jessisca, Anna-Karin and Marcus drink tea at the headman's house of an Akha hill-tribe village.

The children who live nearby and who go to school at the DEPDC in the daytime decided to come back to watch the performance. After a few dances, the girls on the stage began singing and soon were joined by all the children in the audience. I sat there under the stars among the singing children, just watching their faces in the dim light, thinking about what would become of them.

Oy is one of the girls who live at the DEPDC. Her parents are dead. She lived with relatives before she joined the program. During rides around the countryside in the back of a beat-up pick-up truck which takes us to our different visiting places, she and her friends tried to teach us some Thai. They laughed at our unsuccessful attempts. Oy told me she wants to become a teacher or a tour guide.

We went to visit an Akha village which settles into the side of a steep hill. Far below, down through the haze, we could see the rice fields of the lowland.



Girls from hill tribes pose for tourists in Mae Sai to earn money for their families. Some girls are involved in the Development and Education Program on Street Education.

The village headman had invited us to his house. To our surprise, a big satellite dish takes up most of his yard. We sat on the porch with glasses of hot tea and looked out at the village.

The wooden houses, some with bamboo roofs, are built on stilts and people walked around on the muddy paths between them.

The noise of pigs and chicken was mixed with music from a radio. It was the German band Scorpion's *Wind of Change* written about the fall of communism in eastern Europe but it felt relevant there too. The contrast between the old and the new was stark.

The clash between cultures has created problems in many hill-tribe villages. Brothel agents have taken advantage of the people's friendliness, of their unfamiliarity with life outside the village and have tricked them into letting the agents take children to the cities. Contact with the outside world, for example through television, also has created a de-

sire among many people in rural villages for money to buy consumer goods. Earlier, the people grew most of their food themselves and bartered for other necessities.

With no other way to make money, selling a child has become a way for families to obtain cash. It has become an acceptable source of income.



THE KING'S PROJECT

Wide, paved roads lead to the Doi Tung Development Project, high up in the hills above Mae Sai. Well trimmed lawns and flowerbeds surround the project's office building and tourists in nice cars come to visit the nearby summer residence of the Thai Princess Mother. The project is funded by the much admired Thai royal family. They have pumped money into the area where, before, drug addiction, poverty, illiteracy and the selling of children were major problems.

Now, this area is the pride of the Thai government and often is presented as a model project. Opium, earlier the only cash crop, has been replaced by vegetables and fruit, people in the villages receive education and job training, new roads have been built to transport the new crops to the cities and to encourage tourists to come. But the methods used to create Doi Tung were sometimes quite harsh. Opium addicts were given the choice to go through mass detoxification or to leave.

About 10,500 people, mostly Akhas, live in a 150-square-kilometer area which makes up the Doi Tung Development Project.

About 10,500 people, mostly Akhas, live in the 150-square-kilometer Doi Tung Development Project area.



A Doi Tung Development Project cultivates banana saplings. Sixty-five girls, aged 13 years and upward work here.

Of them, 500 work in the project and many have jobs related to Doi Tung. They are drivers, they sell handicrafts or work in restaurants. Efforts have been made to create work for young, unskilled girls who would otherwise be at great risk of entering into prostitution.

Thai Charanasri is manager of a facility that cultivates banana saplings which are then sold to government plantations.

Sixty-five girls, aged thirteen and over, work there. Some work part-time while attending school.

"When they get jobs here, at least they don't become prostitutes when they're so young," Charanasri says. "When they're older they might go anyway but then they're not children, so we are doing something to stop child prostitution."





THE NEW LIFE CENTER

From the hills in the far north we take the bus to Chiang Mai, Thailand's second largest city. We have come to visit the New Life Center, where 170 hill-tribe girls live and study. The center was founded by Baptist missionaries concerned about the sex trading of hill-tribe girls.

To welcome us, the girls dressed up in their tribal costumes that they had made themselves. They sang and danced for us. They even taught us a dance which involves jumping around on one leg. It left us all sweaty and laughing.

In many villages there are no schools and many girls have had no formal education at home. Here, they attend evening classes run by the Thai government. In the daytime, they learn sewing, pattern-making and other traditional arts at the center.

They make dolls with traditional costumes and other handicrafts which they sell to get pocket-money and to be able to send food to their families. There are also Bible teachings and devotions. The girls are encouraged to go to church, but there is no discrimination against girls who belong to other religions.

The New Life Center is now well known in the villages, and it advertises on the radio. Staff at the center interview girls and select those who have especially difficult backgrounds. Last year, 150 came to be interviewed, hoping for one of the seventy places available. The girls usually stay at the center for five years, most of them between the ages of fourteen and nineteen. By that age, they have learned enough Thai and practical skills to have a chance to get jobs. They are also too old to sell. After finishing school many get a job in a factory, restaurant or become seamstresses.

A few years ago, the center had several girls who had come from brothels. After a big police crack-down, many brothels were closed. The problem is still there but has changed shape. Child prostitution now is more hidden, disguised, for example, as massage parlors. Now, the center has only one or two girls who have worked in brothels. It is mostly involved in preventive work.

We had lunch with the girls in the grassy yard of the center. They looked at me with interested eyes and I would like to have asked them a lot of questions. Although we didn't speak each other's languages and communicating was difficult we managed to learn each other's names. Sitting there with the girls in the hot afternoon with a bowl of rice and vegetables in front of me, I got the same feeling as among the singing children in Mae Sai. I was so happy that they were all there and not somewhere where their childhood would be taken from them in the most shameful way.

*Youth against
child
prostitution*



*Lunch with residents
of the New Life Center
in Chiang Mai*



CHILD PROSTITUTION IN THAILAND

Mascha Brand, Netherlands

It seems a long time ago since I was in Bangkok and Hong Kong. Now, at home, behind my computer, everything is so far away, but still every day there are little things I remember about traveling to the other side of the world. I would like to share both good and bad experiences with you.

It all started about a year ago. The LWF/DMD Youth Desk in Geneva, Switzerland, invited me to join a Human Rights Visit, just before the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference (PAYC) in Bangkok. The theme was "child prostitution". Not an easy one, but requiring attention so I didn't reflect for too long before saying: Yes, I'll go. My journey to Thailand and Hong Kong now had an extra dimension.

On June 23, armed with my "Internet" collection of information on prostitution, I walked onto the plane. I had to fly about fourteen hours, so I had plenty of time to read up again about human rights, children's rights and more. Let the adventure begin!

It started immediately at the airport in Bangkok. There was no taxi to pick me up. I didn't speak Thai, I didn't know where the hotel was. Eventually, after a long ride, I arrived at the hotel. I never wanted to have a shower so much than at that moment. In the evening, we met each other over dinner. Very soon, we were talking and talking and talking with each other about everything. Yes, a great group of people! We were scheduled to see some projects in Bangkok and northern Thailand where girls who work as prostitutes or who are potential prostitutes, are taken care of.

WITH OUR OWN EYES

Remember the time you were twelve, thirteen years old? What were you doing? Did you have free time, friends? Did you attend school? Did you have to work in the middle of the night? Patricia Green, of Rahab Ministries, asked us these questions on the first day of our visit, confronting us with the hard reality of the girls in Patpong, the red-light district of Bangkok.

The Buddhist way of life says that children should support their parents. This means they have to participate in providing a livelihood for the whole family. Where can you earn money, if you have no vocational training? In the big city brothels! Many parents send their daughters, and sometimes also their sons, to Bangkok to work as bar girls/boys. Some of the parents don't know that their children not only sell drinks but also their own bodies. Others know what their children are doing, but consider it normal. They did the same in their childhood.

Seen inversely, it is the customers who keep sex tourism alive. Men (and sometimes women) go to Thailand to satisfy their sexual needs. It is very shocking to hear that most of the men are German and Dutch. As long as there is a need for paid sex, girls will offer their bodies.

MERCHANDISE

Of course, I had heard about it before, but now it was stark reality. We European people support the sex industry! Because of us, girls have to sell their bodies up to ten times a night!

It was a terrible thought for me. Especially when I knew I was going to Patpong to see the girls.

I will spare you the awful details. It is terrible to see the girls, sometimes only twelve or thirteen years old, dancing on the podium. The number on their scanty clothes can easily be picked out by the men. I will never forget the bored look and sadness in their eyes. There was one man at the other side of the bar. He looked for his prey like a wild animal.

Rahab Ministries is there to help the girls. The organization has opened a hair and beauty center among the brothels. Some prostitutes work there as hairdressers or "visagistes". They prepare their former colleagues for the night. In this oasis of quietness, the girls find a listening ear, personal care and the Word of God. Through song and Bible readings, the girls are confronted with God, someone who loves them without reservation.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

After this shocking experience, we went to northern Thailand. In Mae Sai, on the border with Burma, we visited the Development and Education Program for Daughters and Communities (DEP). Girls from the hill-tribe villages receive vocational training. They learn to earn money through sewing, teaching, etc. Armed with a job to earn money, the risk of ending up as a prostitute is less. Currently, there are about one hundred girl interns, and some three-hundred receive education. Coordination of the center is by worldwide volunteers. The DEP is supported by the Thai government.



*Vocational training at the Development and Education Program
for Daughters and Communities, Mae Sai*

In Mae Sai, we also visited small projects such as a banana farm. Here, the people grow small banana plants to sell. We heard about the rehabilitation center for drug addicts, established on the initiative of Her Royal Highness Srinagarindra the Princess Mother, mother of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

On the Tuesday, we traveled with an "old-timer bus" to Chiang Mai. We visited the New Life Center. It is just like the DEP and coordination is carried out by the same sort of enthusiastic volunteers. We talked, sang, danced and ate with the girls. We returned to Bangkok by overnight train.

But now it really starts. What should we do with all this information? How can we tell others about our visit? It was so terrible so see and hear. How can we transmit the importance of these projects? It was very difficult for the twelve of us to prepare a presentation. But, at the end of two long days, we had a good one. Still, there is that indeterminate feeling about what to do in our own countries. Is there something we can do? I still don't know. I now go to meetings in different congregations in the Netherlands to talk about our visit. I think it is the most important thing to do: to make people conscious of the problems surrounding child prostitution.

*If you want to receive information
on child prostitution in order to raise
awareness in your own country,
write to:*

*End Child Prostitution & Pornography
& Trafficking of Children for
Sexual Purposes (ECPAT)*

328 Phaya Thai Rd.

Bangkok 10400, Thailand

Fax: +66 2 215 8272

E-Mail: ecpatbkk@ksc15.th.com



"A POWERFUL EXPERIENCE..."

Marcus Grundahl, Canada

The Human Rights Visit was a powerful experience which affected each of the participants differently. Our varied backgrounds in education, in society, in a family, and our religious views gave each of us a unique perspective on the sex industry in south-east Asia. In reality, we tried to understand what human nature really is.

Some pointed questions arose from our experience in Thailand. I will only attempt to address one of these questions.

How do we as Christians deal with such overwhelming differences between people?

This seems to be an open question, and that is what it is meant to be.

The Human Rights Visit showed to me how I deal with my emotions, and how most people use different emotions to block what they are really feeling inside. Let me explain this with an example. The information we were presented with at the initial meetings in Bangkok was very graphic and unsettling. We sat in a conference room listening to story after story of the exploitation of children.

However unsettling this was, most of us were able to block out the reality of the information. It was only during the evening when we went to the sex district of Bangkok called Patpong that we understood the ugly reality. Seeing the young girls dancing and selling themselves was distressing to say the least. By the end of that evening all of us were battling emotions, trying to put in perspective what we had learned with who we are and where we come from.

For me, this was the beginning of an emotional journey. At the end of the first day it was interesting to see how each person dealt with such shocking information. Yes, there were many tears, but there was something else – humor. Yes, humor. The information was so graphic at times that we were forced to joke about the situation. Joking about it may sound tactless and insensitive, but it was not. It was a way to control the information we were dealing with. This was an important lesson for me.

Throughout the visit I encountered my differing emotions, trying to understand what I was really thinking. I understood how many people attempt to put their lives into different watertight compartments believing it to be a good means of caring for oneself. We, at times, use our emotions to balance and hide our real feelings in order to manage our lives. But is that the right way to live our lives?

This brings me back to my original question – *how do we deal with differences among people in the world?* Each person on the Human Rights Visit had to consider how to take this information back to their home countries and communicate it to others. I am sure many of us will speak about the plight of the children and the constructive programs which are in place to effect change. What I want people to hear is how we, as humans, try to fit our lives into watertight compartments, hoping that the difficulties of the *outside world* do not effect our *everyday lives*.

But should we conceive of our lives like that? Is that the way a

compassionate society should work? I would think most people, Christian or not, would agree that social problems are not limited by man-made borders. Differences between people at a social, political, economic, or religious level must not provide justification for creating and maintaining barriers. What each member of the Human Rights Visit understood was the need to accept differences within cultures but not at the loss of fundamental human rights.

The Human Rights Visit has once again forced the question of how we deal with differences between us. After fifty years of existence the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) still must deal with this question. Coming from a member church of the LWF, I hope that all people within the federation continue to focus on finding unity within our differences. For me, the Human Rights Visit focused my attention to how we work with each other. Conceiving and understanding our fundamental human relations is the first step in understanding how we as members of society can deal with the difficulties of the *outside world*, to make it *our world*, thus making it a part of our *everyday lives*.

*Youth against
child
prostitution*



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Ondrej Prostředník, Secretary for Youth in Church and Society



Participants in the LWF Human Rights Visit to Thailand

The role of the Human Rights Visit is to be seen in connection with the preparation of the youth delegates to the LWF Ninth Assembly. Participants in the program were mainly youth delegates who opted to work in the Assembly Issue Group dealing with Human Rights. The information given during the program in the form of presentations, visits and personal talks with people working with programs dealing with the issue of child prostitution, as well as the unique opportunity to talk with some of the girls involved in prostitution equipped the participants with a good understanding of the current urgency and dimensions of this issue and its primary causes.

An important result of the program was the impact on the future orientation of the participants in their social and church involvement. The young people were confronted with the issue of child prostitution in a very direct way, sometimes even in a way that was

too difficult for them to process. This direct, personal experience urged almost all participants to commit themselves to focus on the issue in their future work. In view of this the educational and capacity building aspect of the program was very important and successful.

The experiences with which the participants were confronted forced the group to reflect on its own share of responsibility for the situation. In connection with this, questions of gender awareness often were discussed in the group which was balanced with seven female and seven male participants.

The contact made with the ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes) workers in Bangkok during the visit are of importance for future involvement of the LWF/DMD Youth Desk in the issue of children's rights.

The Human Rights Visit also helped to raise the global awareness of the participants. Reports on the human rights situation in their own respective countries were presented by each of the participants at the beginning of the program. Additionally, in their daily sharing of impressions the participants usually connected the things they saw and heard to the situation in their home countries. It also was very useful to hear how the experiences and information were interpreted by participants with different regional backgrounds. This exchange of regional perspectives on the issue of human rights was a very important element in the global-awareness-raising role of the program.

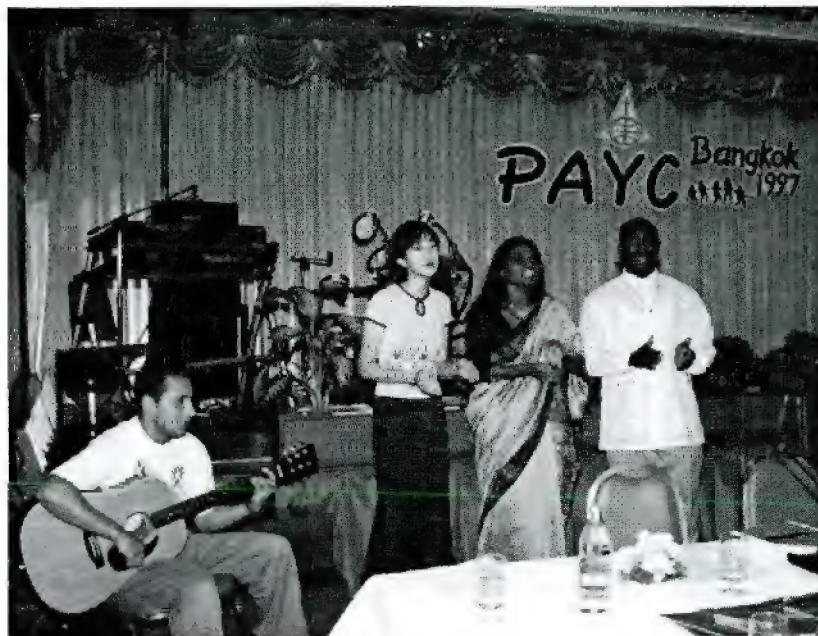
With the experience gained from the Human Rights Visit to Bangkok and northern Thailand it is recommendable that similar activities be planned in the future which would focus on other aspects of human rights.



PRE-ASSEMBLY YOUTH CONFERENCE, BANGKOK, JUNE 29 - JULY 5

THE FUTURE WILL TELL

Elizabeth Fupe, Tanzania



*Carlos (Colombia) Grace (Canada), Sunitha (India) and Bassey (Nigeria)
lead singing during evening worship.*

Being together as youth delegates and stewards at the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference (PAYC) 1997 was, on its own, a memory that I would like to share with you. It was a golden opportunity to be one of the participants in that pre-assembly youth gathering in the beautiful city of Bangkok, Thailand.

Though we had different tasks as delegates and stewards in Bangkok, the Youth Desk did a wonderful job to make us one as youth representatives from the LWF member churches. It was really a wonderful time, we shared many things i.e. culture, songs, issues of the Ninth Assembly in Hong Kong and Bible studies. This gave us power and confidence to participate fully in group decisions at the Ninth Assembly.

The theme: "Be not ashamed - Christ has set us free" was a great challenge to many of us. Together with the Ninth Assembly theme, the PAYC theme encouraged us to be engaged in witnessing to the world.

In Bangkok, we had a very good timetable with very interesting topics which kept us busy throughout the week. In working groups, we discussed five of the ten Assembly issues. We also had fantastic Bible studies in which I found a wonderful jewel being a youth in the federation. The main point in the Bible studies was the matter of TIME. I am proud because it is our time, the time which is fulfilled to hear, to share and to bear fruits. I felt engaged in proclaiming freedom to the world because God anointed

us to serve him. We are called to be the vision for the future of the church. This strengthened me because it is the right time to tell my fellow youth about the future, i.e. my vision for the church.

According to the theme, I found that youth of both sexes have the same goal for the future, i.e. unity and equality in the communion of Lutheran churches, in which inclusiveness of all believers will be the light in the world. We are called to teach our children, our young sisters and brothers, the values of both sexes in the presence of God. This will eradicate the problem of gender bias in the future in which we as youth are called to set others free. I ask you to offer a prayer to support the victims of any violence because you are the father or mother of today.



We are free to bring changes in the church and in the world to make it a safe place for all ages, gender and races.

"Be not ashamed - In God called to witness" is the theme which I combined out of two in giving my views. This gave me a strong desire to learn more about Lutheranism and other faiths and feel free to engage in dialogue. However, the dialogue should be handled in PEACE and respect of either religion to avoid the conflicts which might arise.

The development of science and technology was an interesting issue that challenges us as youth to be a part of the Internet.

I encourage you to take the initiative and try to look for the "LWF home page" on the Internet where you can share with us your vision for the communion of the Lutheran churches.

As I look toward the future I find that I am challenged in my position as a leader. It was encouraging to talk to the LWF Council members 1990-1997 representing youth, hearing about their sorrow and happiness in their struggle to be seen and heard in the Council. I realized the importance of the need for training youth in leadership positions.

Their journey is long but we should be strong and ready for changes. The "LWF 2000 and Beyond" presentation brought my vision like a mirror into which I have to look every day. Looking toward 2000 and beyond is the sign of a "bright federation". I ask you, my fellow youth, if you can make our future as "shiny" as possible to attract the world. "Be not ashamed" because Christ has set us free. I encourage you to participate and be creative, join us in prayers to make our vision come true.

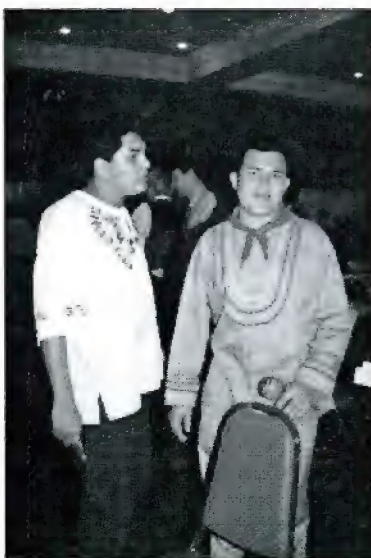
God knows and the future will tell. May God bless you all.



NUESTRO MINISTERIO

Carlos Andres Abril Figueredo, Colombia

En el pasado mes de junio se realizó gracias a Dios la pre-asamblea mundial de jóvenes en Bangkok. Aquí en Colombia y me imagino que en toda Latinoamérica también se están preguntando si esta reunión fue provechosa para los jóvenes delegados de las Iglesias o si simplemente fue un tour por Tailandia. Fue una gran bendición haber estado allí con más de 140 jóvenes reunidos con un mismo sentir de unidad, compañerismo y ante todo amor en Cristo. Al empezar esta reunión muchos de los jóvenes que nos encontrábamos allí estábamos un tanto abrumados al sentir los primeros días una timidez a causa de las barreras idiomáticas, que no fueron lo suficientemente fuertes para impedir la comunicación y ser barrera de bendición en nuestras vidas.



*Adolfo (Nicaragua)
y Ramon (Honduras) en el
evento cultural de la CJPA*

Nos encontramos con una cultura totalmente diferente a la cual no estábamos acostumbrados en nuestros países, pero gracias a Dios día a día todos los jóvenes que estábamos reunidos allí sabíamos que Dios haría algo grande en nuestras vidas, y en nuestros corazones estaba grabado que lo más importante de este encuentro era el compartir la gloria de Dios sin importar las circunstancias por las cuales estuviésemos pasando. Aunque esta unidad y este amor dado por la gracia de Dios y por su gran misericordia se manifestaba de diferentes formas, todos teníamos la certeza de que era Dios mismo por medio de cada joven mostrando su amor su poder y su sabiduría en cada tema tratado, en cada devocional y en cada momento compartido, con el fin de enseñarnos que aun siendo muchos formábamos un solo cuerpo en El como lo afirma su palabra.



Esta fue realmente la esencia y el propósito por el cual Dios mismo nos eligió para estar allí.

Por otro lado vimos no solamente la necesidad de sentirnos uno solo entre nosotros mismos, sino también de compartir el dolor que nos producía ver la gran necesidad de Dios en este país, padres sufriendo de dolor y angustia viendo sus hijos sumergirse en las drogas y la prostitución, y a sus niños morir de hambre a causa de la ignorancia y falta de conocimiento de Dios por parte de los gobernantes, aun de los mismos padres y también, por qué no decirlo, una falta de compromiso de nosotros mismos ya que es nuestra responsabilidad

delante de Dios velar en oración por el mundo sufriente, no solamente velar por los problemas que aquejan a nuestro país o continente, sino por todos aquellos que necesitan el apoyo y el amor de nuestro Señor, porque hemos sido llamados por El mismo a continuar su ministerio donde quiera que vayamos o andemos.

Esta es nuestra misión como cristianos y como Iglesia universal que es la Iglesia de Cristo, la que todos juntos veremos en su segunda venida, a lo cual llamamos el verdadero Ecumenismo.

Ahora como joven y como miembro de la Iglesia del Señor es mi deber animar a todos ustedes a

que oren por todas estas necesidades de nuestros hermanos en Tailandia y no solamente allí sino por el mundo entero, llevando y compartiendo el Evangelio, El cual es vida y salvación para todos aquellos que lo escuchan a fin de que se perfeccione la obra y el ministerio de nuestro Señor Jesucristo aquí en la tierra.

Que este sea el anhelo en cada una de nuestras vidas. Espero que la bendición de Dios padre todopoderoso sea con cada uno de ustedes en su trabajo y ministerio dentro de cada una de sus iglesias y de sus países. Que el Señor les bendiga ricamente.

DÉVOTIONS

Ravaka Bodomalala, Madagascar

Tout d'abord, je voudrais remercier et glorifier DIEU de m'avoir permis d'assister à la pré-assemblée des jeunes tenue à Bangkok, Thaïlande. Ainsi, c'est avec une grande joie que je vous fais part du déroulement des cultes d'ouverture et de fermeture, ainsi que de la vie spirituelle pendant cette manifestation, et que je relate le tout dans le *Youth magazine*.

Ce fut avec un culte solennel dans l'Eglise Evangélique Luthérienne de Thaïlande qu'a débuté la pré-assemblée réservée aux jeunes luthériens du monde entier. Pour commencer, nous avons eu droit à des très belles chorégraphies accompagnées par la musique traditionnelle jouée par les jeunes, issus de l'Eglise eux-mêmes. Ensuite, des membres de



L'orchestre de l'Institut Luthérien d'Education en Théologie joue de la musique traditionnelle Thai pendant le culte d'ouverture de PAYC

l'Eglise, entre autres Pornphan Yuchi, Paitoon Metee, Bishop Somprong Hanpradit, ont adressé les traditionnels discours de bienvenue.

Dans son sermon (pris dans le 1^{er} épître de Pierre 2:1-9), le Révérend Banjob Kusawadee a expliqué ce qu'est la majesté de Dieu et a dit clairement que notre



devoir était de la prêcher où que nous soyons. Il a également soulevé le problème de la prostitution dans son pays, soutenue et promue par le tourisme international, et les souffrances qui en résultent pour beaucoup de jeunes filles thaïlandaises et leurs familles. Il a même cité un exemple concret paru récemment dans un quotidien. Il a appelé l'assemblée à promouvoir son pays pour sa beauté et son accueil chaleureux, mais non pas pour les femmes thaïlandaises. Le culte s'est achevé par la prise de la Sainte Cène. Ensuite, les visiteurs étaient invités à partager le déjeuner avec les membres de la congrégation.

D'autre part, la pré-assemblée s'est caractérisée par les dévotions que nous avons pratiquées matin et soir au Niran Grand Hôtel, où était tenu la plupart des conférences. Le culte a été pratiqué tour à tour selon un ordre préalablement établi par le comité liturgique.

La lecture de la bible, les cantiques, ainsi que les prières ont été chantées et récitées dans plusieurs langues, favorisant ainsi le mélange des cultures et soulignant également le caractère universel de notre grande église luthérienne. Durant tous les moments des dévotions, les cantiques et les chants religieux de toutes langues se succédaient, et des chansons comme "Lord, I lift your name on High", suivi de "Magnificat", nous ont donné la sensation de vivre un instant unique au monde.

Mais toute bonne chose a une fin. Le culte de fermeture se déroula dans la salle de réunions et fut présidé par la Révérende Gertrud Toensing de l'Afrique du Sud.

La lecture était extraite du livre de Jean (20:21).

Dans son sermon, la Révérende Toensing parlait de la signification de Pentecôte et de la volonté de Dieu de vaincre les divisions des peuples et des cultures, contraire à l'histoire de la tour de Babel qui visait à les séparer et qui était utilisée longtemps pour justifier le système d'apartheid dans son pays. Les différences entre les peuples et les communautés doivent être perçues comme une source de merveille offrant des opportunités uniques pour l'enrichissement de l'être humain et celui de la communauté. Bien que nous vivons dans un monde de divisions, de violence et de souffrances, nous sommes unis en Christ, notre Seigneur.

Pour symboliser cette union en Christ et la volonté de prêcher sa parole, les jeunes venus du monde entier ont chanté en chœur :

"Thuma Mina - send me Jesus" et
"I will go - I will go".



*"Christ has set us free to live in this world and shape it into a more promising future"
- PAYC participants in the plenary room*



"BE NOT ASHAMED – CHRIST HAS SET US FREE"

Matthew Chi Ho Luk, Hong Kong



For a Christian it is strange to listen to presentations: "Be not ashamed – Christ has set us free". For a follower of Jesus Christ, it is because we should not be ashamed. Many of us, even I, take this for granted. But is this really the truth?

Just imagine that one day, when our Lord Jesus Christ comes before you (you don't know that he is Jesus Christ) and asks you the question: "Please explain the gospel to me?" What is your response to this question? Maybe you will just reply: "I think that you can consider this question later" or "I am not well prepared now. Please come later." Is that your case? Even if you can explain the gospel to this person, your attitude is something else. Are you really eager to explain the gospel to him, or is it just because you are a Christian and it's your responsibility? Do you do your work as you would go to work in the office? I think that we should make a reflection here. Our Lord Jesus Christ asks us not to be ashamed, not because of our personal strength or any good work we have done, but because of the work done by Jesus Christ. Thus, when we explain the gospel to other people, it would be much better if we would bear in mind the gospel's value. So, I'm now sharing the "good news" with other people.

The two presentations during the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference (PAYC) in Bangkok on this topic were really impressive, and yet we should reflect some more. Maybe just as Dr. Pradit Takerngrangsarit said in his presentation: "If we are ashamed of witnessing Christ to others, that shame suggests our lack of confi-

dence and lack of appreciation and gratitude to Christ for the life given to us." Is this really our present situation? Please remember that "life in Christ gives us new insights to see new visions and new strength to witness his love to the world." The problem is how to give such witness? Dr. Takerngrangsarit gave us a suggestion: "To witness the love and grace of God in Jesus Christ is one critical step. But to put our faith into effective action in the church and society is even more vital." I personally believe that the former part of this sentence is not so difficult for us to follow since we are living under the grace and love of God every day. Nevertheless, the latter part is much more important and, at the same time, much more difficult. How can we put our action into the church and society? I think the point here is that we should bear good witness to other people from our working position. If you are working as a pastor (clergy or bishop), then your wording and performance are a witness to other people, especially to those in your church. If you are a teacher, then how you behave in front of your students is witness to them. If you are a housewife, your work in your family and your attitude toward your family members is your witness. We can have different positions in our life, thus our witnessing is different.

As Christians, our service in the church is another witness to other people. It doesn't mean that the more we do in our churches, the more we can show our witness to other people. Similarly, it doesn't mean that if we do nothing, we cannot show our

witness to other people.

However, it seems that we have an idea that if we are "real" Christians, then we should, more or less, give service in our churches. Actually, this is true for a follower of Jesus Christ to serve God in our churches. But this just means that because we receive love, grace and blessings from God in this way, in response to his love, we serve his church. This is almost like when we receive a gift from a friend, we might also buy a gift for him or her. If you do not, does it mean that he or she is no longer your friend? On the other hand, if you buy a more expensive gift for your friend, does it mean your friendship becomes stronger? You give your friend a gift just because you regard him or her as your friend, not because the friendship is built on gifts. Therefore, if we want to bear witness in our church, it is much better for us to reflect on our service in our churches.

What attitude do *you* have when you are in the service of God?

To conclude, I would like to quote from the Bible what God said to Jeremiah: "Do not say, I am only a child. You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you". (Jeremiah 1:7 NIV). We cannot use our age as an excuse for not witnessing to other people. On the one hand, we cannot say that we are too young, we have plenty of time in the future. Nobody knows when he or she will leave this world, therefore we must use each second to bear witness to other people. On the other hand, we cannot say we are too young, that we do not have enough expe-



rience, that it is much better for those who are more mature to work in the church. If you say you are lacking experience now, when will you have enough experience? At forty, fifty or sixty? I believe that we should keep in mind that our Lord Jesus Christ started to ask questions and was listening to the teachers in the temple at the age of just twelve years.

So how can we use youth as an excuse? Dr. Wanda Deifelt said, "We should never forget to celebrate each and everyone of you as true gifts of God to the church."

We are the youth and we are the future of our churches.

Let's pray for our witness to other people and ask the Lord to give us his work.

I strongly believe the more we pray for God's work, the more of God's blessings and grace will be bestowed upon us.



YOUTH WORK – A MATTER OF SURVIVAL

Lutheran World Information

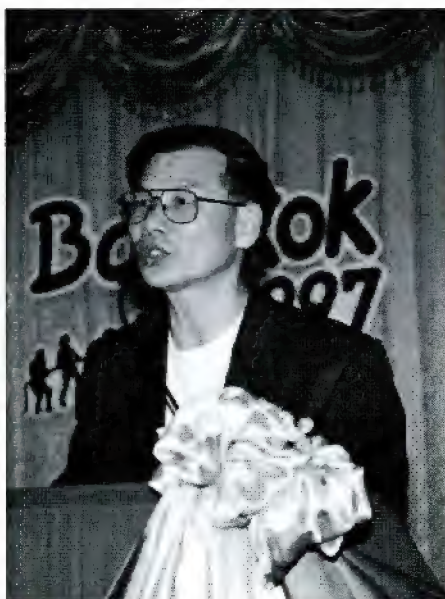
Youth work is a matter of survival of all human beings, rather than a question of mission or of assuring the continuation of the Christian church, Rev. Dr. Wanda Deifelt, from the Escola Superior de Teologia in São Paulo, Brazil said in her keynote speech.

She spoke at the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference (PAYC) being held in Bangkok, Thailand, prior to the Lutheran World Federation's Ninth Assembly in Hong Kong 8-16 July. A second speaker, Rev. Dr. Pradit Takerngrangsarit from Payap University in Thailand also addressed the youth participants from 77 of the 122 LWF member churches who attended the conference.

Attitudes among youth reflect the situation in today's society, Deifelt said. "Because reality reflects the situation of our society, which has its values upside down, it is not possible to blame youth. Rather, all of church and society need to take responsibility."

Speaking on the theme of the PAYC, "Be not ashamed, Christ has set us free," Deifelt said that responsibility and freedom need to

"We must work for justice and peace in the world because we have been set free from the traps of an unjust system and consumer society."



*Keynote speaker
Pradit Takerngrangsarit*

be coordinated, something that is often not the case in today's society. For Christians, she stressed, freedom means not only freedom for me but also for my neighbor.

"Freedom has an ethical imperative, which is justice. There is no room for hierarchy or discrimination since all parts of the body are equally important and necessary," Deifelt said using Apostle Paul's image of the church as a body.

Deifelt ended by saying that she wanted to celebrate the good work of young Christians around the world. "Our faith in God has to be lived out in concrete acts," Deifelt said, reminding participants that good works are not performed on their own, but with the help of God. In his address, Takerngrangsarit focused on the difficulties and possibilities of Christian witness in today's modern world which is shaped by globalization and the advancement of technology. "It is important that we aren't overwhelmed by the influx of modernization but rather rule over it with reasonable, God-given wisdom.

We have to remember that the world is changing but that God is unchangeable."



GETTING READY FOR THE LWF NINTH ASSEMBLY – PAYC WORKING GROUPS



*"We feel that face-to-face Christian communication
should never be replaced by the use of media."
Working group on Values, Power and the Information Society*

A "HOME PAGE" FOR EVERY LWF MEMBER CHURCH?

Valerie Hogue, Canada

*"Values, Power
and the Information Society"*

Twenty-three youth from various backgrounds, cultures, countries and languages made up this group in Bangkok during the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference.

Our first and foremost task was to ensure that everyone was familiar with the Internet. A special "introduction to the Internet" session was held prior to the actual start of group work.

To my amazement, almost three quarters of the group showed up because they had never used the Internet or World Wide Web.

This was a shocking reality for me since I have been using computers for the past fifteen years, and "chat" with other people over the computer. I am well aware that not all countries have such technological devices but to find out that three quarters of the group had no prior exposure was a humbling experience. During this session, the group was shown some of

what the Internet can do such as sending electronic messages, accessing information in other parts of the world including electronic communities through the means of chat rooms. In addition, attention was given to some of the implications, both moral and ethical, of such a communication tool.

The first session focused on understanding what type of mosaic we formed as a group with our differences and similarities both technologically and non-technologically. We were definitely a



varied group in terms of ability and experience of technology ranging from people with little or no experience with computers, fax machines or televisions, to people who had extensive experience using such technology and who have every type available in their respective homes.

Somehow, we managed to communicate and share ideas and opinions despite our differences simply by respecting each other and honoring what every individual had to say. There was great apprehension from those who had very little interaction with the Internet since there was a feeling that the entire working group would be based on computers and the World Wide Web. This was quickly challenged when we began discussing all forms of information-providing media. The focus then shifted away from computers and more along the lines of the information society and the unquenchable thirst that society, as a whole, has for information. A lengthy discussion ensued on the issue of what forms of media are available in the countries of the participants. We were all reminded, and agreed, that even though print, radio, television, telephone, fax, and computers exist, we must never replace face-to-face Christian communication. When using various forms of media as a means of providing information, it is important to take into consideration the technological advancements in each country and find forms of media that reach the majority of people within a specific region.

As the discussions continued, we also examined the role of the church in relation to the Internet. It was agreed that this form of media has a purpose in the church in facilitating dialogue among LWF member churches and the ecumenical environment. Our recommendation is that every member church be given a "home

page" on the World Wide Web. Of course, this raised many concerns such as the primary issue of how churches with no access to the Internet, as a result of either lack of technology or lack of training, can participate in such a recommendation. In addressing the issue, we concluded that since youth in many parts of the world, especially from the North, feel disconnected from the church, we can request their help in creating and maintaining the home pages and thus make them feel essential within the church.

In discussing the topic of communication, we had to evaluate the problems created by language barriers. The LWF has four official languages but often there are representatives to meetings whose mother-tongue is not one of these four languages. Sensitivity and care must be given to ensure that no one feels excluded from contributing valuable insights and information. This was a challenge that our working group attempted to overcome since several people in our group have very limited knowledge of English, the working language of our particular group. So we think the LWF member churches should encourage its members to learn a second language—namely one of the four official LWF languages. It is our opinion that this would not only benefit participants but also would strengthen the ties between member churches.

We also decided that we must all continue to pray for those silenced by political, religious or other groups within their own country. Local intervention efforts must be the most effective means of standing up to powerful media. To achieve equity, we must be in solidarity with one another and work in diplomatic ways. It is vital that the church play a role in stepping forward and analyzing the messages we receive through the media.

Finally, after being asked for our input by the LWF Office for Communication Services, we discussed how we envisioned the LWF home page, in particular, the "youth page."

The main suggestions were that the page be graphically attractive to youth, provide links to useful and interesting information about member churches and other youth groups and activities, maintain current information and issues pertaining to the world we live in, especially with regard to living out our faith as young Lutherans, and provide a section for interaction and message posting for Lutheran youth around the world. It was suggested that because of budgetary restrictions, this page could be created and maintained by an intern with knowledge and experience in Web-page design and a high degree of enthusiasm and creativity.

As facilitator of this working group, I have pleasure and joy in saying that our comments and recommendations were heard. In Bangkok, we prepared for the Assembly in Hong Kong and upon arriving in Hong Kong, we were asked in the working group dealing with Values, Power and the Information Society to present a synopsis of the discussions that took place in Bangkok and how some of our recommendations could be carried forward to the larger Assembly. In addition, we made use of the existing forms of media to spread our message through the means of print, such as this article you are currently reading, through the LWF home page in the discussion area of the working group, and by face-to-face communication with people we met. Despite all the differences that could have hindered our discussions, we were able to communicate effectively through the various forms of media.



WESTERN CULTURE IS TOO DOMINANT

Renata Hinrichs, Czech Republic

"Christian Witness in a World of Religious and Cultural Plurality"

We met in three sessions, so we decided to deal with a different issue at each session.



"Western culture too dominant" say participants in PAYC working group on Christian Witness in a World of Religious and Cultural Plurality.

The first issue we dealt with was "Witness and Religious Freedom." The word "witness" was defined by us as sharing the Gospel of Christ with others in actions and words in order to make disciples.

We find an example of that in Jesus' life. Jesus not only told us to witness according to him but he commanded us to do so, and equipped us with the Holy Spirit for that task (Acts 1:8). Some people thought the command to witness interfered with religious freedom but our conclusion was that it can happen only if witnessing implies the use of force.

We do not see Christian witness as a threat to religious freedom because the proclamation of the gospel does not limit individual freedom of choice when it is done within an atmosphere of love.

During the next session we tried to find a connection between witness and interfaith dialogue.

It was clear that we always have to remember that the goal of our witness is to pass on the good news about salvation only through Jesus. Dialogue in that sense is necessary for witnessing in today's world of religious and cultural plurality. It provides perfect ground for realizing our goal. In other words, dialogue can be used as a means of mission work. In conclusion, we defined dialogue as a process of interaction that promotes understanding, learning, building relationships and, at the same time, providing opportunity to witness.



The last session was devoted to pastoral and missiological concerns. We agreed that the Lutheran Church at present could be better equipped for the task of cross-cultural and cross-religious witness. We believe that some elements of Western culture are too dominant in our church. For example, the old traditional Western Lutheran form of worship may be an obstacle in reaching individuals of other cultures and faiths.

Originally, it was designed for homogeneous societies and, in that form, it does not fit completely into a modern pluralistic world.

It was very obvious that we as youth are eagerly awaiting changes in language, hymnody and worship forms which would be adequate to meet the spiritual needs of young people and of people of other cultural backgrounds. We also agreed that any cross-cultural training provided for seminary students, as well as laypeople, would be helpful.

In this brief report we tried to define the narrow path between extreme approaches to Christian witness. Nevertheless, as Christians, we shall in all places proclaim that the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation comes only in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. "And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God; but whoever denies me before others will be denied before the angels of God." (Luke 12:8-9)



SUFFERING CHILDREN – AN URGENT PRIORITY

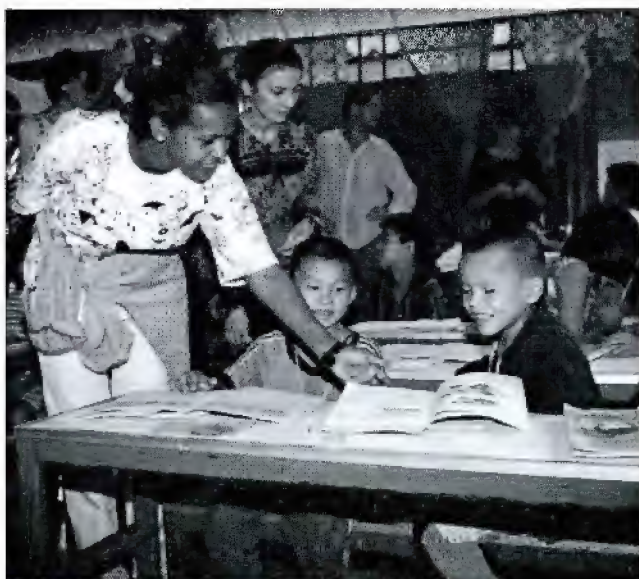
Tero Rantanen, Finland

*"Witness Through Service:
The Christian Response
to a Suffering World"*

As facilitator of a working group in the fifth Pre-Assembly Youth Conference (PAYC) my first task was to propose an outline for the four sessions allocated in

about which we regarded ourselves as competent to speak, namely on the violation of the rights of the child and on the violation of the rights of women.

When it comes to the violation of the rights of the child, our deliberations were centered on child



Human Rights Visit participants at the Development and Education Program, Mae Sai, Thailand

the PAYC schedule. In other words, we were expected to carry out our deliberations on the whole range of socioethical concerns due to be covered by altogether three Issue Groups of the Ninth LWF Assembly, namely those titled "Called to Faithful Stewardship of God's Creation", "Witness Through Service: The Christian Response to a Suffering World", and "Human Rights, Peace and Reconciliation". Therefore, it should be no surprise that setting an agenda turned out to be the hardest part of our work. In order to prioritize, we focused our attention on only two of those most burning issues

abuse in the sex industry. This was first and foremost due to the shocking report which had been presented to the PAYC plenary by the twelve persons who participated in a Human Rights Visit to Bangkok and northern Thailand. This study visit was organized by the LWF/DMD Youth Desk and took place just before the PAYC. As a result of its deliberations on the topic the working group suggested that the LWF "campaign throughout all levels for the rights of the child, especially paying attention to the sex industry and all forms of exploitation of children" (quoted from the PAYC message).

To that end the working group further suggested that the LWF/DMD Youth Desk "create a network to enable the sharing of adequate information regarding the exploitation of children" (quoted from the PAYC message). It deserves to be mentioned in this connection that the tenth Issue Group of the Ninth LWF Assembly, titled "Human Rights, Peace and Reconciliation" also spent more time on deliberating on the violations of the rights of the child than on any other concern, and stated that "the suffering of the children compels us to make their support and protection an urgent priority" (quoted from the reports and commitments of the Ninth Assembly). Unfortunately, time didn't allow our working group to pay adequate attention to the violation of the rights of women. However, it is of the utmost importance that the topic at least be placed on the agenda. The tenth Assembly Issue Group, which paid much attention to addressing the rights of women, reminded us that "Violence against women is widespread in society, and happens also in the church and Christian homes" (quoted from reports and commitments of the Ninth LWF Assembly).

Due to the very limited schedule, many burning issues didn't even find their way onto the agenda of the working group. Even though we had our own difficulties, I am personally satisfied with the work of the fifth working group. Taking into account the limited resources of our churches and of the LWF Secretariat, I regard it as most important that some clear priorities were set, however painful it sometimes was.



“LWF 2000 AND BEYOND” UND ALLES, WAS DAMIT VERBUNDEN WAR...

Karin Manz, Deutschland

Seit meiner Rückkehr aus Hongkong sind nun schon einige Wochen vergangen. So habe ich heute versucht, anhand meiner Unterlagen und Tagebuchnotizen, mich in die Zeit in Thailand und Hongkong zurückzusetzen. Beim Durchlesen meiner Notizen kamen mir viele Erinnerungen an ganz besonders intensive Begegnungen und Erlebnisse wieder. Jeder Tag war ein Erlebnis für sich—voller Überraschungen—so reich, daß man tagelang daran hätte zehren können.

Zu einem der wichtigsten Ereignisse gehörte für mich u.a. die Präsentation der Jugendlichen “LWF 2000 and Beyond” in Hongkong. In einem Komitee, in das ich auch gewählt wurde, sollten wir auf der PAYC in Bangkok an drei Abenden ein Konzept erarbeiten, das von allen Jugenddelegierten und Stewards ausgearbeitet und realisiert werden sollte. Ich hatte mich schon in Deutschland ausgiebig mit Visionen Jugendlicher von Kirche beschäftigt und freute mich auf diese Herausforderung, weil es meines Erachtens schon lang an der Zeit ist, daß die Stimme der Jugendlichen gehört wird.

Relativ schnell konnten wir feststellen, daß unsere Vision von Kirche, obwohl wir aus ganz verschiedenen Erdteilen kamen, einander sehr ähnlich waren. Wir hatten die Vision einer inklusiven Kirche, die Andersdenkende



Ein Poster wird für die Jugendpräsentation der Vision: "LWB 2000 und danach" gemalt

nicht ausschließt, sondern mit ihnen ins Gespräch kommt, einer Kirche, die Ökumene lebt und mit Andersgläubigen feiert und in den Dialog tritt und einer Kirche, die das Nord-Süd-/Ost-West-Gefälle überwindet und eine gleichberechtigte, vom Geld unabhängige Gemeinschaft lebt. Die Arbeit im Komitee verlief nicht immer problemlos. Oft gab es Missverständnisse, da wir uns in einer Sprache unterhielten, die für die meisten von uns nicht die Muttersprache war. Auch die Arbeitsmoral war sehr unterschiedlich und es fiel mir oft schwer, nicht als typisch deutsch aufzutreten.

Bei dieser verantwortungsvollen Aufgabe, an die viele Erwartungen geknüpft waren, mußten wir viel Geduld miteinander haben.

Nachdem unser Grundkonzept vom Plenum angenommen wurde, arbeiteten alle Jugendliche dieses in Kleingruppen inhaltlich aus. Mit musikalischen Formen, Tänzern, Pantomime und Meditation sollten wir unsere Vision zum Ausdruck bringen. Zwei Tage und Nächte verbrachten wir damit, das Skript in den Computer einzugeben. Oft kam ich an den Punkt, wo ich nicht mehr imstande war nachzudenken, ob das alles Sinn ergab und zusammenpasste. Eike und ich schrieben noch bis zur letzten Minute. Mein Gepäck wurde von zwei lieben Seelen eingepackt und dann

sassen wir kribbelnd im Taxi, weil wir Angst hatten, das Flugzeug zu verpassen.

In Hongkong angekommen stellte sich heraus, daß bis zur Präsentation noch viel organisiert werden musste. Meine PlenumsnachbarInnen haben sich bestimmt oft gewundert, wo ich mal wieder blieb, denn ich musste viele Sitzungen ausfallen lassen.

Dann kam die Hauptprobe – die Spannung war groß. Würden alle kommen? Pünktlich? Wir hatten nur eine Stunde Zeit! Die Probe entpuppte sich als ein einziges Chaos, und ich wußte nicht, ob ich weinen, lachen oder einfach



rührungslos den Saal verlassen sollte. Doch es ist bekannt: Wenn die Hauptprobe schiefgeht, dann klappt die Aufführung. Am schönsten war der Moment als sich die verschiedenen Gruppen, die voneinander isolierte Konfessionen darstellten, das Lied "Bind us together" sangen. Plötzlich sagte mir jemand: "Schau dich mal um". Das ganze Plenum hielt sich an den Händen und sang mit. Der Funke unserer Vision war übergesprungen, und es war ein wenig von "communio" zu spüren, was

bei dieser Konferenz eher eine Rarität war. Die Präsentation verlief überraschend gut, wenn sie auch mit der ein oder anderen unlieblichen Überraschungen geschmückt war. Wir hatten allen Grund stolz auf uns zu sein.

Aber ist die Message angekommen, und wird sie ernst genommen?

Es soll nicht bei den Visionen bleiben. Werden diese Visionen, so wie wir sie präsentiert haben, Auswirkungen haben auf den Alltag in den Mitgliedskirchen

und im LWB? Ich habe oft darüber nachgedacht und war plötzlich etwas traurig, daß wir unsere Message nicht kritischer formuliert haben.

Obwohl diese brennenden Fragen offen bleiben müssen, kann ich doch sagen, daß die Arbeit auch trotz des Zeitdrucks viel Spaß gemacht hat und möchte zum Schluß alle ganz herzlich Grüßen, die mitgewirkt haben.

"Wacht auf—wacht endlich auf
und seht, was um Euch herum passiert.
Hört auf in Euren Kirchen eine Komödie zu spielen
und Euch über Theorien und Papiere die Köpfe heiß zu reden.
Wacht endlich auf.
Seht das Leid in der Welt an—
die Frauen, die unterdrückt und vergewaltigt werden—
die Jugend und Kinder, die aus Verzweiflung und Einsamkeit sich in Drogen stürzen...
Sie alle haben Träume einer besseren Welt,
viele von ihnen Visionen einer anderen Kirche—oder christlichen Gemeinschaft.
Wacht endlich auf.
Geht zu den Menschen,
sprecht mit Ihnen,
nimmst sie ernst.
Teilt mit Ihnen Eure Gedanken, Eure Liebe und Euren Besitz.
Laßt den Sabbat in Euch kehren.
Mach Euch frei von dem Verhängnis der Worte,
in das ihr verstrickt seid.
Öffnet Euch,
leert Euch,
dass anstatt leerer Worte, Gott in Euch kehrt und in Euch wirkt.
Wacht endlich auf,
sonst werdet Ihr irgendwann alleine in Euren verstaubten Kirchen sitzen.
Jetzt ist die Zeit...
Laßt die Kirche eine lebendige Gemeinschaft werden,
in der jede/r gleichberechtigt teilhaben kann."

Karin Manz



MESSAGE OF THE LWF PRE-ASSEMBLY YOUTH CONFERENCE

BANGKOK, THAILAND, 1997



1. We, the Lutheran youth, gathered in Bangkok, Thailand, at the 1997 PAYC have been given the theme "Be not ashamed: Christ has set us free." This meeting in Asia is important because it gathers together youth from all corners of the world. We are also a part of the celebration of the LWF's 50th Anniversary. We appreciate the feeling of being a natural and necessary part of this celebration. To do some reflection at this time in both directions seems appropriate. As we look back to the years behind us, we acknowledge that efforts have been made to include youth, which started in Hanover in 1952, and resulted in increased participation of youth at the Eighth LWF Assembly in Curitiba 1990, when seven delegates representing youth as full members of the LWF Council were elected. At this meeting in Bangkok we prepared a presentation for the Hong Kong Assembly titled "LWF: 2000 and Beyond".
2. We realize the close relationship of this conference's theme with the 1990 PAYC theme in Buenos Aires "Do Not Say: I Am Too Young—I Send You." As children of God, we are called to freedom as witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through Bible studies dealing with different aspects of time we reflected upon this theme. We further explored the meaning of this theme within our working groups. With prayer and songs we accompanied the handover ceremony of Hong Kong to China.
3. "Be not ashamed: Christ has set us free." This is meant to be a liberating message from Christ. Unfortunately, in the reality of our broken world, it is extremely difficult to reflect this message of hope in our daily experience. We face the harsh realities of drug addiction, political corruption, child labor, HIV/AIDS, the growing gap between the rich and the poor, the environmental crisis, a rise in militarism, discrimination, consumerism and materialism, urban violence, human rights violations and social injustices worldwide. In the light of this bleak global situation, it is not a surprise that youth today feel a great sense of disillusionment and indifference. Youth feel powerless and unable to engage in active struggle for change. However, the words 'Christ has set us free' give us hope for the future. Christ has set us free to live in this world and shape it into a more promising future. To do so, we must use the skills acquired in our work with the LWF. Christ has set us free to build inclusive, loving communities.
4. We greatly appreciated the presentations given by invited guests from different perspectives relating to the theme of the conference. We found a common theme among these presentations; namely, an emphasis on the need not only to be a witness in our congregations, but also to be an active participant in our societies. We find this important because isolating ourselves in our respective congregations is unrealistic and contrary to the example of Christ. God calls us to be agents of change in the world, as those who have been freed by Christ from the bondage of the world. We also listened to an informative lecture from a professor of Buddhism who addressed the similarities and differences between Buddhism and Christianity. We appreciated this opportunity to engage in structured, respectful interfaith dialogue. There was an enthusiastic response and lively discussion following this presentation. We believe this kind of dialogue is essential to peaceful coexistence and open attitudes among different faiths.
5. We hope that through the experiences offered by the LWF structures, for example, the Young Women's Leadership Development Program and the Youth Internship, youth will be encouraged to utilize their leadership skills within society as well as within local churches. Advocacy for social justice and change is challenging in light of the pressing problems of the world. We believe that only truthful witness is relevant witness to the world.



6. Reflecting on the theme of the PAYC, on the presentations and on five of the ten LWF Assembly Issues, participants came to the following conclusions:

COMMITMENT TO CHURCH UNITY

7. In order to attain the highest level of church unity, we encourage the LWF Office for Ecumenical Affairs to:
- pass on the information pertaining to the outcome of the dialogues to the local levels; e.g. through addressing ecumenical issues at youth gatherings and church services;
 - prepare documents with information about the differences between the denominations and the significance of the sacraments so as to promote mutual understanding and acceptance;
 - initiate, encourage and promote cooperation and dialogue between Lutheran congregations as well as between other denominations, e.g. by funding youth gatherings, exchange programs, international camps and meetings;
 - encourage cooperation between the local churches, the missionary movements and missionaries at different levels, and promote ecumenical unity among themselves.

CHURCHES AS LIVING COMMUNITIES IN DIVERSE CULTURAL SETTINGS

8. Churches can serve as safe places. This means a place of openness where we can learn through the experience of crosscultural reality and also a critique of our own culture using Christian criteria as a parallel by:
- building relations with other churches through intercultural gatherings, worshiping together, sharing information and education about diverse cultures;
 - organizing training and leadership programs, visitation programs and continuing to support international gatherings;
 - developing contextual theology in different regions of the world and giving financial support to all programs.

CHRISTIAN WITNESS IN A WORLD OF RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL PLURALITY

9. Dialogue is necessary for witnessing in a world of religious and cultural plurality in a Christian sense. Dialogue is a process of interaction which promotes understanding and learning, builds relationships and provides opportunities for witnessing to Christ's mission. The dialogue should be centered at Jesus and be a combination of tolerance, appreciation and love.
10. We think that the dominant Lutheran form of worship, which is traditionally western, is old-fashioned and does not really suit contemporary youth of all cultures.
11. In view of this, we recommend:
- that member churches educate their members to be firmly rooted in the Christian faith and then enter into dialogue;
 - that the LWF member churches support crosscultural programs for youth;
 - the organization of opportunities for dialogue within the Christian community as well as with other faiths and sensitivity to regional concerns;
 - the encouragement of Christians in all places to proclaim that the fulfillment of God's plan comes in Jesus as our Lord and Savior; and
 - that the churches be encouraged to develop more contemporary forms of worship which are sensitive to regional cultures where people of various ages actively participate.



VALUES, POWER AND THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

12. It is important that the LWF Secretariat ensures that member churches have access to information. We feel that face-to-face Christian communication should never be replaced by the use of media. When using media, the technological advancement of the region must be taken into account. Priority should be given to the forms of media which reach the people within each region most.
13. We feel that among other media, the Internet has a purpose to serve within our church—to facilitate dialogue and also act as a means of witness to the world. We recommend that every member church should be given the opportunity to have a home page on the World Wide Web. We feel this will help communication between the LWF member churches. We believe the youth could be encouraged to help create and run these home pages allowing them to feel essential within the church.
14. While discussing communication, we looked at the problems created by language barriers. We would like the LWF member churches to encourage its members to learn a second language—namely one or more of the four official conference languages. We believe this will strengthen links between the member churches.
15. We must continue to pray for those who are silenced by political, religious or other groups within their own country. Local efforts of intervention may be the most effective means of standing up to the powerful media. We must work in ways which are diplomatic to achieve equity. Observing the realities through our own eyes, not only through printed words, will help us to discern reality from media bias. The church must also play a role in stepping forward and analyzing the messages we receive from the media.

WITNESS THROUGH SERVICE — THE CHRISTIAN WITNESS TO A SUFFERING WORLD

16. In talking about a suffering world we feel insecurity and fear but we are also hopeful and confident about the willingness to act and to develop visions. We feel it is important to stress that there are no historical, cultural, or economic reasons to justify injuries to human dignity. Working with this issue we focused our attention on the violation of the rights of the child and of women.
17. We therefore reiterate the following needs:
The LWF Secretariat and LWF member churches should:
 - campaign at all levels for the rights of the child, especially paying attention to the sex industry and all forms of exploitation of children. To that end, the LWF Youth Desk should create a network to enable the sharing of adequate information regarding the exploitation of children. This network should also involve the WCC, NGOs, and governments;
 - pressure the respective governments to fully implement the Declaration and the Agenda for Action adopted by the World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children;
 - encourage special moral, religious, and prayerful support to the victims of sexual violence;
 - voice their concerns about pornography and violation of the rights of the child, especially on the Internet.
18. The second issue dealt with the situation of women and girls. Due to the prevailing perceptions surrounding gender in society, equal partnership of men and women is not yet possible.
19. We therefore recommend as a first step the following needs:
 - encourage the LWF Youth Desk to develop a theological approach related to the question of women's rights in a way that does not exclude non-theologians;
 - educate children to respect their parents equally, as well as all women in order to eradicate inequality in the future;



- urge pastors to combine traditional marriage counseling concepts with gender sensitive approaches to foster equal relationships between women and men.

EVALUATION OF THE LWF YOUTH PROGRAM

20. We appreciate the encouragement, support and opportunities given by the LWF Council. We urge member churches to make use of the youth Council members to interpret and continue the work, include representatives in LWF-related activities at the regional-national level and facilitate actions, information and cooperation.
21. We reviewed the activities of the LWF Youth Desk from 1990 to 1997 and appreciated its efforts to interpret and implement the 1990 PAYC recommendations. Concerns were raised regarding long-range planning, North-South balance and program implementation. We support the continuation of the internship programs.
22. We therefore suggest to the LWF as well as to the Youth Desk to:
 - evaluate concerns with regard to staff overload and urge the setting of priorities appropriate to staffing;
 - provide opportunities for the regional youth Council members to serve as consultants to the Youth Desk;
 - build and maintain relationships with regional youth networks. The problem has been the constant turnover in the national church youth leadership;
 - turn energy from publishing the Youth Directory to developing new forms of connecting youth including among others the Internet and the World Wide Web;
 - organize and encourage youth leadership training in pre-Council meetings;
 - hold an evaluation of the 1997 PAYC in early 1998.



CONCLUSION

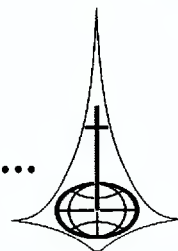
23. As we discussed the results of the work in different working groups it became clear that, whatever the starting issue was, many strong feelings were common to all participants:
 - *Education* is needed to defeat illiteracy and to place people in equal positions for debate about human rights issues. Education about our Lutheran faith equips us to more effective dialogue with other faiths.
 - There is also a need to strengthen *communication* as the most powerful way to express the needs of the communion.
 - The understanding of *mission* must be seen from the perspective of the people who receive it as well as from the perspective of those who proclaim it so as to promote better relationships between the churches.
 - We recognize the utter violation of *human rights* taking place in different forms in all our regions. As Christians we are called to witness through words and especially through actions, in order to strive for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.
24. Each person is an essential part of the body of Christ and therefore we must involve everyone, including youth, within the community of all believers. It is imperative to find ways for the Communion to express itself in reality. Therefore, youth must be accepted as valuable and essential members at all different levels of decision making in the Federation including their full participation in the Executive Committee. The contribution of youth through biblical interpretation, worship and liturgy, regional gatherings, national and international conferences has been a revitalizing force from which the LWF has gained considerably and can certainly be further promoted.



AT THE LWF NINTH ASSEMBLY IN

HONG KONG

CHINA ...



During the "LWF 2000 and Beyond" presentation prepared by youth, participants of the LWF Ninth Assembly in Hong Kong were asked to write down their visions for the LWF on green paper leaves. Here is the text which introduced the importance of having visions and taking care of them:

"At times the visions fell on rocky soil. They did not have much soil so they were choked. Visions can help us to gain courage, power and hope. If we have no visions left, our future will be empty and without hope. I think visions have to be taken care of. You have seen our visions and maybe some of these are also yours. They are known to you.

Allow these visions to have some room in you. Where do you find room in your church to bring in your visions? You might be the water that small plants need to grow or the light that they need to live by. You might take care of them so that there is no rock in their way. How can you see to it that these visions grow — to be strong, and big and bear fruit some day?"

Agenda, LWF Ninth Assembly Exhibit 11.4

More networking among youth, exchange of experiences and development of programs to enhance youth participation, leadership and communion.

...daß etwas von der Gemeinschaft des LWB auch auf die Gemeinden vor Ort ausstrahlt, und auch gelebt wird.

Ich träume von einer phantasievollen und kreativen Gemeinschaft, die einladend ist für andere und selbstverständlich Hilfe anbietet.

Ich wünsche mir, daß wir die Stimme des Verstandes mit der des Herzens verbinden.

Partage vrai.
Fraternité. L'autre
d'abord. PAIX
JUSTE.

Ich habe die Vision einer Kirche, die etwas mehr Biß hat und sich traut auch mal anzuecken und wirklich Stellung nimmt.

Sueño con niños sonrientes.
Sueño con mayor espiritualidad en los seres humanos.
Sueño con más mujeres ordenadas.
Somos uno con Dios.

Mein Wunsch ist, daß viele junge Menschen einen oft erstarrten LWB in Bewegung setzten, so wie wir es heute Abend erleben konnten.

Full unity in Christ!
Nu är ingen längre ung, eller gammal, tysk eller indier, man eller kvinna, lutheran eller katolik eller anglikan, eller.... Vi är, ska vara, ett i Kristus!



Once upon a time I wish that we do no longer need any quotas because there is no longer any problem of equality – but we all sing the song of 1 Cor. 13: “Love is without end”

That by the year 2000 all LWF member churches will ordain women pastors and send more young women to theological colleges.

My dream for the “LWF 2000 and Beyond” is a growing unity and stronger cooperation among the churches.

Mayor participación de la juventud. Comunión entre todos los Luteranos. Igualdad para las mujeres.

Tempos de igualdade; Tempos de liberdade; Tempos de paz.

Ich hoffe, daß die Kirche nicht ständig politische Rücksichten nimmt.

My vision is that the LWF will be able to put into practice what we have discussed and decided: empowerment of youth and women from the grassroots level up to the Council.

Ich habe den Traum, daß wir wieder ein Wort haben, auf das die Welt hört.

Mit christliche HEIßE Liebe Welt von EIS befreien!

A round table where everybody can participate and where the Lord is with us.

Mon souhait et ma prière est que le Seigneur guide la FLM dans des 50 ans à venir de réaliser la communion fraternelle, promouvoir l'esprit de partager notre foi avec les autres, la sanctification et la vie vivante en Christ.

I have a vision that the LWF community will be able to translate words through communion into ACTION!

That we may all take serious responsibility for helping to create a better environment.



YOUTH PRESENT VISION FOR AN INCLUSIVE CHURCH

Lutheran World Information



Photo: Ken Ward

LWF youth at the LWF Ninth Assembly in Hong Kong, 8-16 July 1997

"We have a vision" of a church where "there are people, young and old, of different races, speaking different languages, the weak and the strong, the rich and the poor, Christians of different confessions, people of different faiths"

youth told the Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation.

In their presentation, "The LWF 2000 and Beyond," they used drama, dance, poetry, music and meditation to help the Assembly experience some of their feelings in addition to listening to the words of their vision. The youth spoke of their hope for a church that is "a safe place and an inclusive church." They hope for a church "which is not divided on a regional, racial, gender and economic basis but united in Christ as his body."

Youth attending the Assembly as delegates and stewards met in Bangkok, Thailand, June 28 - July 5, at a Pre-Assembly Youth Conference (PAYC) under the theme "Be

not ashamed - Christ has set us free." At the conference they studied a variety of issues, got to know one another and prepared their report to the Assembly.

"Youth today feel a great sense of disillusionment and indifference," they said in a message from the PAYC. "Youth feel powerless and unable to engage in active struggle for change. However, the words 'Christ has set us free' give us hope for the future."

In their vision for an inclusive church, the youth said they look forward to every LWF-member church ordaining women to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. "We also dream of a future when our churches will embrace both feminist theology and liberation theology and will no longer be limited to a traditional male-oriented interpretation of theology."

In their PAYC message, the youth were critical of worship in the Lutheran Church: "We think that the dominant Lutheran form of worship, which is traditionally

Western, is old-fashioned and does not really suit contemporary youth of all cultures." In their vision for the future: "Modern instruments, dancing, new songs in a new style, and culturally sensitive and culturally appropriate liturgies will reshape our praise, worship and thanks to God!"

The youth also expressed concern for divisions within the church and spoke of how they want to "meet the other eye-to-eye, heart-to-heart to spread together the message of love throughout the world so that we will see our different traditions and understandings as a source of richness and strength."

"Youth are the source of renewal of the church and society as a whole"

Dr. Ishmael Noko, LWF general secretary, said. He said it is important for the LWF to invest in youth for the sake of the church.



LES JEUNES TÉMOIGNENT À TRAVERS LEURS VIES

Nickey Lazarus-Gaseb



Nickey Lazarus-Gaseb, secrétaire de la jeunesse de l'Eglise Evangélique Luthérienne de la République de Namibie

Nickey Lazarus-Gaseb, secrétaire de la jeunesse de l'Eglise Evangélique Luthérienne de la République de Namibie a déclaré que les jeunes aujourd'hui exprimaient leur foi à travers leurs vies: "Une nouvelle culture se développe. De plus en plus de jeunes s'engagent dans des activités religieuses, des rencontres de prière et des réunions d'adoration. Le témoignage est perçu par le biais de séminaires, de camps de jeunes et par leur propre engagement. Ils invitent leurs pairs à les accompagner à des manifestations pour jeunes et des camps où est prêché l'Evangile."

Louange et adoration sont les moyens les plus répandus que les jeunes associent à Dieu. Ils croient que "Dieu devrait être loué dans le sens biblique du

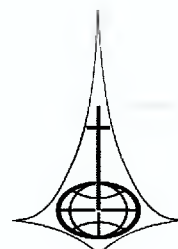
terme avec des tambourins, des cymbales et des instrument de musique" et bien sûr par la danse. Les jeunes font l'expérience de traditions "rigides et inflexibles" et quittent l'Eglise Luthérienne "pour une nouvelle Eglise où l'on peut glorifier le Seigneur sans réserve et sans le cérémonial traditionnel."

Les jeunes se sentent exclus des Eglises dans lesquelles on les considère comme "une Eglise passive pour demain, inscrite dans des congrégations, et non pas comme des partenaires égaux dans l'annonce de la Parole de Dieu aujourd'hui."

Ce n'est pas facile pour la jeunesse africaine d'être témoin du Christ. "De nombreux poids pèsent sur nos épaules et nous empêchent d'aller de l'avant.

Par le terme de "poids", je ne veux pas seulement parler de pêché dans la vie des jeunes mais aussi des problèmes et des maux sociaux qu'ils rencontrent comme la guerre civile, le chômage, le manque d'accès à l'éducation et aux services sociaux, la criminalité, la pauvreté et le génocide. Les jeunes ont la possibilité d'offrir un témoignage constructif pour l'Eglise et la société mais cela demandera beaucoup de travail et de dévouement."

FLM Information





DELEGATES CALLED US BY ANY NAME— SHSS! HEY! YOU! ...

David Udo, Nigeria

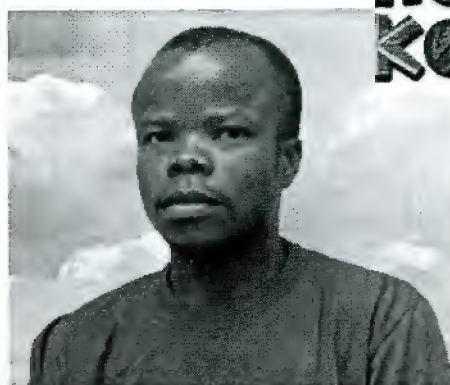
When I saw my name among those selected to attend the LWF Ninth Assembly as a steward, I was overwhelmed with joy and excitement, mixed with apprehension. I had read about youth stewardship at LWF meetings and assemblies but had never experienced it. Part of my preparation was to look for articles written by youth stewards relating their experiences in the service of the LWF. I did acquire some useful information, but was still curious as to what the real experience would be like.

For obvious reasons, my fears stemmed not only from the long flight to Asia, but from the fact that I was going to meet people I had never met before and work with, or work for, them. However, my apprehension was lessened when we were introduced to the role of stewards in Bangkok, Thailand, during the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference.

I arrived in Hong Kong with a sense of enthusiasm. This was somewhat dampened when the pilot of Cathay Pacific Airlines, prior to landing, announced bad weather and difficulty in landing. Thank God we did land safely!

In Hong Kong, our first task was a meeting of the stewards with the stewards' coordinator. We fondly called her Christie. Here, we were introduced to the task ahead and to the group and places where we would serve. I was to serve in the plenary.

Each group of stewards had a simple daily routine.



David Udo

We woke up early in the morning to have breakfast, took a two-minute walk to the harbor to board the Star Ferry across the bay, and walked to the Hong Kong Convention Center (the venue of the Assembly) to join our respective group for the day's task depending on our schedule.

For me, serving in the plenary was the most exciting place to be. The plenary is where the total number of Assembly participants met. The oval-shaped meeting hall had a stage and an array of chairs that were so arranged as to give a spectacular scene when viewed from any direction.

My work, and that of other stewards in the plenary, was to assist in the smooth running of the Assembly, by running errands, distributing documents, helping speakers with microphones or catching participants' attention when a point of observation or order was to be made.

The work was divided into sections, each steward being assigned a small section. Other tasks included attending to participants' personal requests, checking the pigeonholes when required, or replacing a worn-out earphone. Delegates called us by any name: Shss, Hey, You, Boy or Girl and occasionally, steward. Actually, I did not mind.

Serving in the plenary gave me a real taste of the Assembly. I could listen to any discussion, get to know peoples' names, get to know Assembly procedures – quite an education. I was equally fascinated by the efficiency of the coordinators, the spirit of team work exhibited by the stewards and the encouraging smiles on the faces of some delegates. I also recall the words of Dr. Ishmael Noko, LWF general secretary, when he defined a steward as a "person entrusted with treasures".



Oh, you say: "What about the 'down' times"? Of course, there were bad moments. When I was too tired, when delegates became irritable because of a missing paper on his/her table instead of asking for one and, sometimes, when the air conditioner made it almost too cold. And, when I remember that I have to repeat a semester because I attended the Assembly.

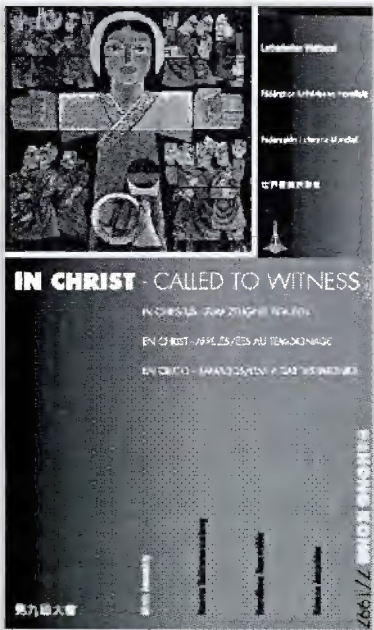
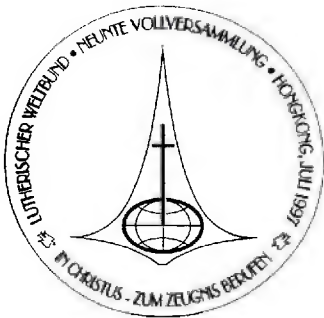
On the whole, my experiences at the LWF Ninth Assembly in Hong Kong 8-16 July 1997, were very rewarding.

I learned the pride of selfless service, the value of team work, I saw the LWF at its best and participated in that Assembly which also marked the Golden Jubilee Celebration of the federation.

I felt as if I had been in Lund in 1947 when it all began and the euphoria has stayed with me even now the Ninth Assembly is over. The experience has motivated me to choose to organize a group of young people to serve as stewards in my church, the Lutheran Church of Nigeria (LCN) at important events such as the board of directors meeting, the Annual Lutheran Council and the LCN Synod Convention.

I believe this also will serve to motivate other young people to be ready to serve God with joy and pride. I wish I could be an Assembly steward forever.

"A million thanks to the LWF Youth Desk for giving me this opportunity."



Stewards get together at LWF Ninth Assembly, Hong Kong



YOUTH REPRESENTATION IN THE NEW LWF COUNCIL

WHAT IS THE LWF COUNCIL?

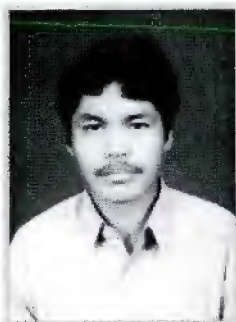
The LWF Council consists of 48 persons and is elected by the Assembly. The term of office of the Council ends at the close of the next ordinary Assembly. The Council is, among other things, responsible for the business of the Federation in the interim between ordinary Assemblies and meets at least once a year. The Council elects the General Secretary and the Treasurer, decides on the structure of the Secretariat, decides on the budgets of the Federation, elects Vice-Presidents of the Federation, the Executive Committee and the Project and Program Committees.

*Among the 48 members of the new LWF Council elected by the Ninth Assembly in Hong Kong there are nine persons younger than 30 years of age.
We asked them to introduce themselves to our constituency.*

I always had and still have a dream. I dream of building up a just society in which all God's creation can live in peace and harmony without any threat to its survival.

I am from the Assam State of India, which as one of the most neglected and backward states of India needs special attention and consideration. Here, the church faces constant challenges from the society, and I believe it also has a special role to play. As youth are the future leaders of the church, they need to acquire proper educational training so that they are aware of their future task. As an LWF Council member representing youth, I consider the following issues as important and challenging for the young people in my region.

I would like to organize and coordinate the Lutheran youth of this region. Without proper organization youth, though they have tremendous power, talent and capability, cannot do tremendous work for the church and society.



Mr. Ipendra Borgoary

Leadership training on various levels is another very important issue which I want to aim at. The church needs proper leadership for meaningful growth and survival as the body of Christ in this world. This can be done by regular seminars, workshops, and exchanges of youth and study programs.

Another important issue is awareness-raising concerning drug addiction, HIV/AIDS, the environment, gender discrimination, child labor, etc. all of which are increasing problems in this region. Unemployment also is a major problem for youth which has given rise to many other problems over the years also affecting the church.

So, I strongly feel the need for welfare income-generating projects.

The majority of youth in this region are relatively weak in English and therefore incompetent in many areas. Intensive English-language training is very much needed for youth leaders and young church workers. In many areas of the region from which I come, there are no formal educational institutions so the majority of people are illiterate. Communication facilities are very poor.

Further, promotion of better ecumenical relations also will be one of my aims. Human rights education has become more and more important in this region too because of rising violence, terrorism and exploitation.

There also is a great scarcity of drinking water. The majority of people here are farmers, but they still adopt ancient methods of cultivation which result in low production. Poverty is rampant. These are some of the very important issues toward which I wish to aim. I hope and pray that the LWF will be kind enough to help me achieve these goals.

See next page for Ipendra's address.



I was born in Bielsko-Biala, Poland, and I live in Cesky Tesin in the Czech Republic.

I have a Masters in Special Education, am a graduate of the English Language College, Warsaw University, and a graduate of the Lay Ministry Training Center, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA.

As my name was placed on the list of candidates I came up with a few ideas that I would like to follow up on as a Council member of the Lutheran World Federation.

First of all, I want to be a voice for youth representing a fresh and realistic view on the position and role of youth in the present Lutheran Church. I believe it is important to say what needs young people have and what changes in the church they are eager to see.

Secondly, I want to represent laypeople emphasizing the necessity for a change of focus in the Lutheran Church.

I would like to see transition from a merely doctrinal, theoretical, theological focus to a focus on a personal spiritual relationship with Jesus.

It seems the majority of laypeople are less interested in church politics or history than in the practical everyday advantages of living close to Jesus.

As a representative from eastern Europe, I hope to speak up for the rights of countries from our region, for independent home church politics. In my opinion, it is important for churches in our region to learn how to make decisions on our own without any interference from outside especially where controversial issues are concerned.

I also see a need for warning our relatively young, developing churches about the teaching of liberal theology if it tries to shed doubt upon the authority of the Scriptures. At the same time, I would like to encourage them to stand strong in their faith on the inerrant Word of God.

My ultimate goal is to promote and support any evangelism projects reaching out to the members of our churches as well as to people within our communities.

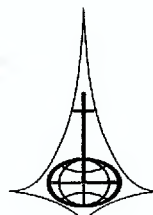


Renata Hinrichs

By bringing the message of salvation to anyone who does not know Jesus as their Lord and Savior we would be fulfilling the final command of Jesus: "Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

*Ms. Renata HINRICHS
Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession
in the Czech Republic
Na nivách 7
73701 Ceský Tesín
CZ - Czech Republic*

*Mr. Ipendra BORGOARY
Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church
P.O. Dumka
Bandorjuri Mission
814101 Dumka
Bihar
IN - INDIA*





Nací en un hogar Cristiano, mi padre es pastor Luterano y mi madre maestra en el colegio de la Iglesia. Desde los doce años de edad comencé a colaborar en la enseñanza a los niños de la escuela dominical. Mi vocación fue ser docente y me preparé en la Universidad como licenciada en educación y hace cinco años enseño en el colegio Luterano San Lucas de Bogotá. Coordino el trabajo con los jóvenes de la Iglesia Luterana San Lucas en Bogotá y junto con ellos formamos el grupo de alabanza en los servicios religiosos acompañando con la música y el canto.

Los jóvenes además de su participación en la vida espiritual hacen trabajo social con los niños y los ancianos. Cuando las

mujeres de la Iglesia Evangélica Luterana de Colombia nos invitaron a participar en sus actividades los jóvenes lo hemos hecho y nos sentimos bien con ellas a pesar de la diferencia de edades.

Como miembro del Consejo de la Federación Luterana Mundial en representación de la juventud latinoamericana me propongo los siguientes objetivos:

1. Motivar a las iglesias miembros de la FLM a través de la correspondencia en mi participación que me permita la Conferencia de obispos y presidentes de las iglesias luteranas de América Latina, para que le brinden mayor espacio de participación a la juventud en el gobierno y en las actividades de cada iglesia.
2. Impulsar la proclamación del Evangelio a través de la música y el canto como un medio para llegar a la juventud que está en los vicios y la drogadicción y utilizar su tiempo libre en cosas productivas.
3. Promover la capacitación de la juventud luterana en los diferentes campos del saber a fin de fortalecer la iglesia luterana latinoamericana en sus diferentes ministerios.
4. Desde el Consejo de la FLM apoyar los proyectos que presenten los jóvenes luteranos latinoamericanos y los de otros lugares del mundo.
5. Promover un encuentro de delegados juveniles de la iglesia luterana latinoamericana para antes del año 2000.

Ms. Zulma INEYDA OJEDA
P.O. Box 51538
Calle 75, No. 20-54
Santafé de Bogotá
Cundinamarca
CO - COLOMBIA

*Greetings to you in the
name of our Lord and
Savior Jesus Christ.*

My name is Gabriel Kamau Wanjohi. I was born in December 1972 in Timbila Village, Taita Taneta District in the coast province. I received my primary education in Malukiloriti Primary School and then joined Timbila Secondary School in 1990 until 1993. In September 1995 I was elected to participate in an exchange program with Germany - during this time I was working as youth chairperson in my parish.



Gabriel Kamau

adolescent psychology, counseling and leadership management. I graduated in March 1997.

The young people of my region are challenged by Western communication systems which impact them with unsuitable infor-

In 1996 I was elected as National Youth Chairman.

I joined the Limuru Training and Conference Centre to study youth leadership skills,

mation, regarding styles of dress, advertisements for condoms, etc. As a result youth gets pulled into drugs and drug abuse leading to undesirable abortions and so forth. It is my hope that during this period of seven years we will be able to cooperate and so uplift and save the lives of many young people worldwide.

Mr. Gabriel KAMAU
Kenya Evangelical
Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 54128
Nairobi
KE - KENYA



Youth magazine asked me to write something about myself and my issues as a fresh member of the LWF Council. Here goes!

I'm thirty years old (qualified for the group 'youth') and a doctor, working in a hospital in the Netherlands. Since the LWF Assembly in Hong Kong in July 1997, I'm an LWF Council member. The Council is the highest decision-making body of the LWF. Astonishing! How on earth did I get myself into this position?

In the Netherlands, I was involved in youth work. Since May, I'm a member of the Dutch Lutheran Synod. From June 1994 to October 1996 I took part in the LWF Leadership Training Program for Younger Women. Because of this program, human rights took my interest and after I went to an LWF human rights workshop in Hong Kong, I spent three months in the Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem as an intern.

Working with Palestinian refugees, I gained some valuable insights into what it means to be living in a permanent conflict situation. And also what it means to be a complete outsider (white Christian female in an Arab Muslim male world).

Now that I'm on the Council some people ask me what my goals and issues are. One problem around Europe that I notice, is the lack of interest of young people in the regular church and vice versa. They are definitely interested in religion and God, but a lot of churches are too old-fashioned to hold their interest. Besides, there are too many other things to do. For the churches to stay alive and grow, it is imperative that they find and renew their link with youth. This will be something for me to keep an eye on. Another topic is human rights. This is not just something for doctors without borders, or the UN, but starts at home with your own attitude.

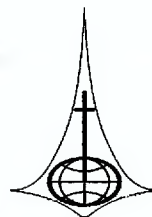


Mary Janssen van Raay

I feel that if you do not condone racist or sexist jokes, if you do not tolerate disparaging comments based on prejudices about refugees, asylum seekers and the like, you are well on your way to making this world a better place. It is easy to have an intolerant attitude. It is much more difficult to start thinking about a fellow human being, to place yourself in his/her shoes, so to speak.

These are the issues I start out with. No doubt there will be others to follow. I am looking forward to seven intensive, inspiring years. I hope to hear from you in the years to come. My E-Mail address is: maja@knmg.nl.

*Ms. Mary JANSSEN VAN RAAY
Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Kingdom of the Netherlands
Jan de Bakkerstr. 13-15
3441 ED Woerden
NL - NETHERLANDS*



*Youth representation
in the
new LWF Council*



Seit 1988 bin ich zum Landesjugendkonvent der Ev.-Luth. Kirche in Thüringen delegiert und seit 1990 auch Jugenddelegierter in der Thüringischen Landessynode. Auch bin ich Mitglied des Kreisjugendkonventes und im Jugendausschuss des Deutschen Nationalkomitees des LWB. Ich verbrachte ein Jahr als Au-Pair in den Vereinigten Staaten und studiere jetzt Informatik in Erlangen.

Im neuen Rat des LWB will ich einerseits die Stimme meiner Landeskirche zu Gehör bringen, andererseits die Stimme der jungen Generation.

Ich denke, wir müssen auch bei den Finanzen des Weltbundes neue Prioritäten setzen und gegebenenfalls, auch einmal Positionen streichen, für die unsere Mittel nicht ausreichen. Auf dem Weg der Ökumene werden wir vorankommen, wenn die "Gemeinsame Erklärung" zur Rechtfertigung, wie geplant, nächsten Sommer in Augsburg feierlich von beiden Seiten unterzeichnet wird.

Mr. Wolfgang LINDNER
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thuringia
Postfach 10 12 63
Dr. Moritz-Mitzenheim Str. 2a
99802 Eisenach
DE - GERMANY

Schließlich will ich mich bemühen, künftigen Vollversammlungen zu einer besseren Arbeitsstruktur zu verhelfen, z.B. deutliche Trennung zwischen Austausch und Begegnung und etwa drei Tage intensiver Geschäftssitzungen mit Entscheidungen und Wahlen.

Hello!

My name is Helle Rosenkvist and I come from Denmark. I am twenty-four years old and am in my fifth year of the study of theology.



Helle Rosenkvist

This summer I had the opportunity to work as a steward for the LWF at its Ninth Assembly in Hong Kong. It was very interesting and challenging. For me, it was a new experience to be together with Lutherans from all over the world. I earlier had taken part in different ecumenical youth events, but most of the participants were Europeans from many different denominations.

At the Assembly I was elected to the new Council as a youth representative for the Nordic subregion.

I am very glad that I had the possibility to meet some of you and also to get an impression of how this big federation works. The Council members will be divided into working groups dealing with different themes. Right now, these groups have not been fully established, so I don't know what will be my special area, but I am sure I will find it interesting.

One of the issues that I consider as challenging for youth in my region is the worldwide Lutheran fellowship. All the countries in the North have a big Lutheran majority church. To be part of a big church has the danger of narrow-mindedness. For Lutheran youth in the North it could be both interesting and challenging to meet and learn from Lutherans from other parts of the world.

Ms. Helle ROSENKVIST
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark
Council on Inter-Church Relations
Vestergade 8/1
1456 Copenhagen K., DK - DENMARK

What's it like to be Lutheran today? What's it like to be a church in conflict?

Another issue relevant to the Nordic region could be a discussion on how to build the "perfect" Lutheran church in our area. The biggest churches in the North have many resemblances, but at the same time differ a lot from each other e.g. in the way they are structurally built. What is our "dream" like? How can we as youth contribute to its realization? I hope the LWF will provide a network where we can support and inspire each other. All our churches throughout the whole world have their strong and weak points - have something with which they can contribute and something to receive and learn. Before we speak, and decide, I hope we will listen and learn.

If you have any good ideas or comments you are very welcome to send them to the Youth Desk in Geneva!



Greetings!

My name is Dianha Aurelia Ortega and I am twenty-four years old. I live in Fargo, North Dakota, United States of America. Norwegians and Germans settled in this part of America and brought their Lutheran culture with them. I am "Latina" (I was born in Mexico), and very proud to be Lutheran. I have been a leader in the Lutheran Church since I was fifteen years old. Most of this involvement has been with youth ministry but also with peace and justice work and multicultural ministry. Fellowship with other Christians has become a special part of my life. My inspirations, my dreams, and my wishes are all for the church because I believe it is the place where we can find true happiness and "shalom". I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. I majored in Spanish and International Relations, with a minor in religion. I currently work at Concordia in their office of Admissions. Someday, I would like to continue my studies and earn a Master of Arts degree in theology.

I do not wish to become an ordained member of the church, but rather, a lay minister, using my skills in administration, organization and programming.

It was an honor to have been elected to the LWF Council this last summer. I expect this position to be one of the biggest learning experiences of my life.



Dianha Ortega

I believe I have good talents to help make the LWF an even better organization, too.

I have faith, I'm sincere, and working with people of other cultures is one of my favorite things to do. Most of all, I look forward to expanding mine and others' horizons on theology and ministry. Have you ever noticed that some adults don't say something they want to in a church setting because they don't want to appear foolish?

Or have you noticed that sometimes people become more concerned with ideologies than with Christianity? Also, what about the times when there is spiritual hunger in some ministry circles?

These are all situations I wish to put on my agenda as a member of the LWF Council. Sometimes, we have to act on what we think is foolish in order to help ourselves stay directed toward God's path. We should always remember we are all interconnected with each other spiritually and environmentally. That should override any ideological alignments. Today's youth hunger for community, meaningful personal relationships, and a sense of belonging—all of which the church can serve them until their cups overflow!

I look forward to meeting many other young people and helping the church address the needs of the (very near) future. I also look forward to meeting many of you: readers, leaders, followers, ministers, and hopefully someday—friends! Peace!

Ms. Dianha ORTEGA
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
8765 W. Higgins Rd.
60631-4197 Chicago, IL
US - USA

The contribution from the following youth member of the new LWF Council unfortunately did not arrive in time to be included in this issue of *Youth* magazine.

Ms. Anne-Maria NDANGA-TOUE
Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic
P.O. Box 100
Bouar
CF - CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC



MEET EMILY — THE NEW LWF INTERN

Greetings!

I am the youth intern placed at the Desk for Women in Church and Society (WICAS) in the LWF Department for Mission and Development in Geneva. Since I arrived, I have already learned so much and met so many kind and welcoming people. I am from Boston, Massachusetts in the USA but I grew up in Wyoming, Nebraska, Illinois and Colorado. I graduated in 1996 from Saint Olaf College in Minnesota with a Bachelor's Degree in Religion and Women's Studies. During my third year of college, I studied Irish History and Theology at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. Since graduation, I have worked as an English teacher at a girl's high school in Seoul, South Korea and as a financial consultant in Boston. Throughout high school and college, I have been active within the church, first as the secretary of the US National Lutheran Youth Organization and now as a member of the Steering Committee of the Commission for Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. My travels and work in the church have been incredible blessings by opening my eyes to the varied traditions and struggles of people from different parts of the world, as well as strengthening my faith and commitment to peace and justice. Next autumn I will enter Harvard Divinity School as a Masters of Divinity candidate in order to develop these interests further.

I am excited to have the opportunity within the next nine months to learn more about the issues and concerns of this global community of Lutherans.

As a participant in the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference in Bangkok and a North American delegate to the LWF Ninth Assembly in Hong Kong, I feel that many of these is-



Emily Rapp

ues have already surfaced among the discussions, resolutions and committee meetings. In both the youth and adult communities, I have been particularly impressed with the united Lutheran voice that continues to speak in a committed way about ending violence against women and children, combating poverty and the worldwide spread of HIV/AIDS, the ethical use of technology and media in the expanding information age, and sensitivity to issues of culture in worship, leadership development and participation.

Assigned to the WICAS desk, I will help address some of these and the other issues lifted up this summer, remembering that perspective often shifts when seen through the lens of gender and that women's rights are *human* rights. Specifically, some of my tasks will include compiling and organizing information about women in the member churches for the WICAS data bank, recording the activities of the regional coordinators that provide an invaluable network for channeling women's concerns across the globe, and helping with *Women* magazine. The WICAS staff and their supporters have already made considerable strides toward

the equal participation of both men and women on all decision-making and activity levels of both church and society. However, there is much work and research yet to be done, particularly in the areas of women's theological education and rights to ordination, access to appropriate health care, and freedom from sexual and domestic violence. I am especially concerned about the education of girls and leadership development of women. I am also interested in how to involve women in rural areas and those with disabilities in the life of the church as both groups often remain isolated for social, cultural and/or economic reasons.

I expect to keep my eyes and ears open over the next nine months in order to learn from the wisdom of my colleagues and the scope of their work. The diversity of the LWF makes it a powerful tool for reunification in our broken world. The inclusivity and empowerment of each person regardless of gender, color, economic status, sexual orientation or ability is central to the creation of a true global communion of Christian faith and service.

Emily Rapp



HOW DO YOU BECOME AN LWF YOUTH INTERN?

HERE'S HOW!

Since 1980, the LWF Youth Internship Program has offered young adults the possibility of learning from, and contributing to, the life of the LWF, mainly at the LWF headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland and a few placements in World Service Field Offices and LWF member churches.

PURPOSE AND AIMS

- To offer a chance to contribute to, and to learn from, the ministry of the LWF headquarters, Department for World Service field programs and LWF member churches.
- To provide the LWF with resource persons who can contribute, especially in the field of LWF youth involvement.
- To give young people an opportunity to develop skills within a department where it is possible to combine their educational background or work experience with projects, studies and program activities of the department and of the LWF as a whole.
- To provide an international ecumenical experience for young people so that they may be better equipped to contribute to the life and work of the church from a global perspective.

REQUIREMENTS

Age	below 30 years
Education	college/university or comparable degree
Language	fluent English
Civil status	preferably single
Endorsement	of an LWF member church

Since the internship program serves all LWF member churches the LWF Youth Desk tries to give equal opportunity to candidates from all LWF regions. In the past three years there have been interns from Latin America, Europe and North America so preference now will be given to applicants from Africa and Asia.

The next internship will commence in September 1998 for a period of nine months. Applications submitted before 31 January 1998 will be considered.

For further information please contact

*The Lutheran World Federation
Department for Mission and Development, Youth Desk
P.O. Box 2100 - 1211 Geneva 2 - Switzerland
Telephone: (41-22) 791-64-37
Fax: (41-22) 791-64-01
E-Mail: pro@wcc-coe.org*



"RECONCILIATION – GIFT OF GOD AND SOURCE OF LIFE"

SECOND EUROPEAN ECUMENICAL ASSEMBLY, GRAZ, AUSTRIA

The Second European Ecumenical Assembly (EEA2) organized by the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE) took place in Graz, Austria, 23–29 June 1997. The assembly was a mixture of celebration, official meetings, encounter, dialogue and festival, attended by approximately 10,000 people.

An Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe (EYCE) youth group of 24 also participated in the EEA2. The main tasks of this group were to participate in the youth program of the EEA2, run the EYCE stand at the Agora (market place) with exhibition stands of different church organizations, help with the EYCE-coordinated workshops (Living with the Reality of Migration in Europe – Women and Men Together Within the Church) and to distribute leaflets and posters about the Youth Gathering '98.

The EYCE stand at the Agora served as an information center and as a meeting point for EYCE people. Reports, publicity sheets, information on the Youth Gathering, and presentations of the work of the member organizations were displayed at the stand. The "Arbeitsgemeinschaft Evangelischer Jugend" (aej) initiated the European Music Project which also took place during the EEA2.

It consisted of choral singing, bands, instrumental music, slides, etc. Concerts were organized outdoors and in different premises of the EEA2.

EYCE Circular Letter - September 1997

The LWF Youth Desk covered the expenses of four stewards at the EEA2 from its program "Participation of Youth in International Activities".

THEY LOOKED LIKE UFO CREATURES

Heli Huttunen, Finland



In principle, I knew all the names of the delegates in the Second European Assembly (EEA2). Together with a Romanian and an Irish steward we put name stickers on paper tablecloths just before the opening ceremony. The idea was to put them in pure alphabetical order—leaving countries and denominations in disorder.

From the viewpoint of a steward, or participant in the EEA2, it could be called more than anything else, an ecumenical carnival, hundreds of encounters between 10,000 people, most of them as surprising as the people the delegates found sitting next to them in the plenary hall.

The delegates worked hard on their papers, they had to reach a common understanding on expressions used. My own time was spent delivering documents, adjusting headphone wires and running around the plenary hall with a microphone in my hand. The participants had a difficult job choosing from all the options available. Inevitably, they missed many of them.

Usually, my free time did not begin until the evening, when sometimes, even heated discussions on different subjects had already taken place. People gathered for evening prayers and to dine together.

Every evening, there was a celebration, warm-hearted people, wine and music—it was a kind of grass-roots ecumenism I hardly ever come across in Finland.

The Assembly of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) started the following week, June 30–July 4, 1997. In the beginning it was hard to start a new assembly. The nature of the meeting was very different from that of the EEA2. There was only a small group of people left and the presence of Catholic Austria was no longer so visible. Now, people concentrated more on the actual meeting and the taking of decisions.



The delegates were seated by country and denomination. They negotiated and formed groups. But the stewards' tasks remained the same, at least in our group: documents were delivered, headphones wires were adjusted, microphones were handed to participants, this time from morning to late in the evening. But, the good spirit of the stewards group was still there.

When I think of it now, several months later, working as a steward was an eye-opener, and for me especially, regarding one thing: in many respects, church or ecumenical meetings do not differ from any other meeting. People are thoroughly human, for better or worse. Highly respected church leaders usually are easy to approach.

But, sometimes, it was difficult to approach them with a polite smile, especially if he or she had installed his or her headphones wires upward, causing them to look like an UFO-creature. Kindness and endearing technical helplessness had its effect. It was such a pleasure to help when possible! The stewards' work was appreciated. However, delegates and staff members made it clear that stewards were on the lowest rung of the hierarchy: snapping and paper grabbing from stewards' hands were permitted, but thanking them was not deemed necessary. Sometimes, I felt that pleasure in helping is not immortal, so to speak.

As a steward, I also realized that decisions are not made in a totally unreachable reality. The church or ecumenical movement is not just "some people out there". Though it is difficult to say what concrete meaning the documents written on reconciliation in Graz will have, something good certainly happened. Thousands of people returned from Graz with increased enthusiasm about and commitment to ecumenism, me included. In spite of secularization and suffering in the world today it is not at all bad to live as a Christian: ecumenism is the best thing that has happened to the church for a long time.



Photo: Marianne Eidersten/CEC

Calling people to silence—one of the stewards' tasks during the Second European Ecumenical Assembly, Graz, Austria, 23–29 June 1997.



"ENTHUSIASM" – BEGEISTERUNG-KONFERENZ IN FINNLAND 13.-16. AUGUST 1997

Matthias Paul, Deutschland

Siikaniemi ist ein ruhiges Plätzchen in der Nähe von Lahti, Finnland. Ein wunderbares Tagungshaus gibt es dort, gelegen an einem schönen See. Einen eigenen Bootsanleger hat das Haus auch – und natürlich mehrere Saunen. Es ist eben Finnland.

Mitte August war es, als wir uns in dieser anregenden, konzentrierten Atmosphäre zu einer Konferenz getroffen haben. Das Zentrum für Jugendarbeit der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche Finnlands hatte eingeladen. Am Ende waren wir über 60 Leute, die irgendwo in Europa in der Jugendarbeit tätig sind.

Doch nicht nur in Europa: Jaime aus El Salvador war dabei, Jessica aus Malaysia, George aus Tansania, Moses aus Indien und andere mehr.

Wir haben uns vorgenommen, uns gegenseitig aus unserer Jugendarbeit zu erzählen, welche Erfahrungen wir vor Ort gemacht haben. Vor allem, und das ist wichtig, welche *guten* Erfahrungen wir gemacht haben. Jugendarbeit ist nicht immer einfach – und so ist es nötig, sich über die guten Ideen auszutauschen: Was hat funktioniert? Können wir vielleicht voneinander lernen?

Und so gab es schon vor der Konferenz einige "Hausaufgaben" für uns: Wir sollten sie aufschreiben, unsere "success stories", unsere "Erfolgsgeschichten" in der Jugendarbeit.

Für mich war das eine ungewöhnliche und gute Erfahrung. Wahrscheinlich sprechen wir zu häufig nur von Dingen, die nicht gelingen (und davon gibt es natürlich auch in der Jugendarbeit viele). Wie nötig haben wir es doch, uns gegenseitig Mut zu machen!

"Enthusiasm" – "Begeisterung": Unter diesem Motto stand dann auch die Konferenz, und dies war auch in einem tieferen Sinn gemeint: Das griechische Wort "entheos" steckt darin – "in Gott", also in Gottes Geist zu sein. Diese Erfahrung gilt es, unter uns Christen zu teilen: Das bewegt seit Pfingsten die Kirche.

Uns gegenseitig mit Begeisterung anzustecken, zu inspirieren, in Gottes Geist in Bewegung zu sein: Darum ging es in den Tagen in Finnland, und es ist wirklich gelungen.

In Arbeitsgruppen stand der Austausch über konkrete Projekte in der Jugendarbeit, unsere "Erfolgsgeschichten" standen im Mittelpunkt. Je nach Weltgegend waren sie natürlich verschieden. Doch eines war allen gemeinsam: Wie können Jugendliche mit ihren Fragen, aber auch mit ihren eigenen Glaubenserfahrungen stärker in das Leben der Gemeinden, der Kirche integriert werden? Welche Elemente der Jugendkultur eignen sich dazu, um anzuknüpfen?

Aus den Niederlanden zum Beispiel gibt es Impulse, die Popmusik zu nutzen. International sehr erfolgreiche Stücke sind von tiefer Religiosität geprägt und bieten Gesprächsanlässe in der Jugendarbeit. Neue Wege werden über Computerspiele gesucht. In einem anderen Projekt produzieren Jugendliche eigene Videos, um Zeichen gegen den Rassismus zu setzen. Eine andere Perspektive hörten wir aus England: "Dare to care" – "trau dich, dich zu kümmern" heißt das in etwa übersetzt. Jugendliche werden in ihrem Wunsch, sich konkret für andere sozial einzusetzen, ernst genommen, und dieser führt zur Bildung und Stärkung von Jugendgruppen.

In Finnland wird in der Konfirmandenzeit angesetzt: Längere Camps im Sommer werden mit den Konfirmanden unternommen, um ein Stück gemeinsamen Lebens zu realisieren, und um in einer anderen Atmosphäre auch Zeit zu haben, über Gott zu sprechen.

Es hat der Konferenz gut getan, den Blick auch über Europa hinaus zu werfen. Ganz andere Schwerpunkte entstehen in anderen gesellschaftlichen Umfeldern. So hörten wir aus Indien, wie versucht wird, mit der sogenannten "Kaste der Unberührbaren", den "Dalits" zu arbeiten, um der christlichen Vision der Gleichheit aller Menschen Ausdruck zu verleihen. Aus Afrika haben wir gehört, wie bedrängend das Thema "AIDS" dort ist. Die Jugendarbeit dort versucht, sich der großen Herausforderung zu stellen.

Der Erfahrungsaustausch auf dieser Konferenz war begleitet von einigen Referaten, in denen noch einmal grundsätzlicher nach der Theologie und dem Glauben junger Leute gefragt worden ist.

Alles in allem waren die Tage in Finnland eine wirklich "begeisternde" Erfahrung, und die Konferenz selbst ist ein Modell, das man im eigenen Umfeld gut kopieren kann. Auch im eigenen Bereich, in der eigenen Region, in der eigenen Stadt ist es eine wirklich lohnende Sache, sich über die Dinge auszutauschen, die in der Jugendarbeit gut gelungen sind.

Es muß ja nicht immer alles selbst erfunden werden – gemeinsam geht es einfach besser.



A SELECTION OF SUMMARIZED "SUCCESS" STORIES

"There are often meetings between churches where words dominate. It is an accepted principle, however, that actions speak louder than words, and that people learn more from what the churches do than from what they say. The goal of this conference then is to let our actions speak."

This is how Mr. Rauno Elomaa introduced the philosophy behind the "Enthusiasm" Conference, focusing on the successful methods and practices of youth work experienced in the churches. The intention was to hold a meeting where we could inspire each other, share each other's experiences and learn from each other's successes as youth workers of one holy Church. So the basic element of the conference came out of the "success" stories of church youth work shared by the participants.

More than thirty such case studies were discussed in five working groups. These were then supported by the five thematic presentations that provided a theoretical and biblical background against which to consider the practical case studies. The presentations were intended to deepen the work actually being done in the working groups.

(Excerpted from a report by Juha Mustonen)

FINLAND

A Three-Step Course System After Confirmation – Kaisa Huhtala

- * A method of involving teen-age youth in the life of the church in a city of 70,000 inhabitants and a suburban parish of 8,000 members.
- * Most of the 15-year-olds attend confirmation classes annually, after which most parishes in Finland conduct courses for those who want to become group leaders in future summer camps.
- * In order to offer a place for these youth leaders in the future, complementary courses for a second year on the responsibility of organizing and for a third year based on discussion of various topics have been developed.

DENMARK

Music Videos, the parables of our time – Kristian and Tove Brogaard

- * In the work of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) Ten Sing and in confirmation classes, contemporary music, lyrics and musical videos have proved to be a good way to encourage young people to listen to sermons.
- * Using music from the teenagers' own culture makes way for a real meeting between teenagers and the gospel. For example, a video of Billy Joel (River of Dreams) can be used when dealing with issues such as baptism, belief and identity.

GERMANY

Partnership between South Africa and Germany – Matthias Paul

- * The project sets out to promote the idea of global church partnership and ecumenical learning in youth work. In the spring of 1996 a group of young people from the South African church circuit (Johannesburg-West) visited the German church circuit (Burgdorf).
- * A return program is planned.



GREAT BRITAIN

Eight O'Clock Live - David Robertson

- ✦ Eight O'Clock Live is a new Sunday evening service which is culturally relevant and accessible to young people through the use of multimedia, interactive games, drama, music, Bible presentations, silence, etc.
- ✦ The service does not exclude older people, to the contrary, it sets out to be participatory and inclusive in every way. For example, the organizational structure is team-orientated—run by a team of six members whose most important focus is to involve others, especially young people, in their areas of responsibility.

THE NETHERLANDS

Pop and Spirit Project - Dan Verbaan

- ✦ The project is about using pop music (language of meaning for young people) as a source for communicating on questions of meaning and faith.
- ✦ It is about developing methodological material which combines specific pop songs with aspects of the life of youth as well as with biblical stories and themes.

TANZANIA

Christian Student Fellowship - Sirkka Peltola and George Fupe

- ✦ The Tanzanian Student Christian Fellowship (UKWATA) an ecumenical youth fellowship has school branches which are fora for spiritual growth as well as for development of skills in music, drama, income-generating projects and practical leadership.
- ✦ UKWATA can be seen as building a bridge between the student world and traditional parish life. Its choirs sing in services and some students are Sunday school teachers. Some dioceses and schools recognize its work by supporting UKWATA to enable it to have regional Easter meetings and a national meeting.

ZIMBABWE

Controlling AIDS at District Level - Netsayi Matambira

- ✦ The Hatfield Baptist Youth Group carried out a pilot project in Mrewa district to investigate how society can actively be involved in the fight against AIDS, a major epidemic in Zimbabwe.
- ✦ After careful consideration the following recommendations were made: that churches give moral education according to the Bible, that parents educate children of both sexes (not boys at the expense of girls) and that the local community build a training institute to teach young people crafts (e.g. dress-making or cooking).

INDIA

Student Christian Fellowship / Indian-Dalit-Christian-Family - P. Moses Paul Peter

- ✦ The Indian-Dalit-Christian-Family provides Dalits with the possibility of living with the hope that God is the God of those who are oppressed and marginalized. The dominant church in India has failed to prove itself as a casteless community.
- ✦ The fellowship has tried to raise awareness among Dalit students to be organized and educated to resist any form of exploitation. One example is a workshop where listening to the stories of people and reflecting on the scriptures has enlightened students. Another example is street theater which has played a vital role as an alternative media.



FEMALE AWARENESS WORKSHOP

Robert S. Gonoë, youth director, Lutheran Church in Liberia

"That they may be one" was the theme for the four-day Female Awareness Workshop held 28-31 August at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Phebe, near Gbarnga, central Liberia. Some fifty-five young women of the Bong district parishes were in attendance for this very important program.

John 4:1 ff). It was a long conversation between the two persons. The woman, a Samaritan, and Jesus a Jew. John puts it as if the meeting was accidental (verses 4,5), but Paul writes in Acts 1:8 "...and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth".

dom to those who were hurting, and told them that the time of the Lord has come.

This mission is left to all of his followers. Women must take the challenge seriously.

The Female Commission of the National Lutheran Youth Fellowship was established in 1995 to



Photo: LWF Archive

Some of the participants pose with the speakers during the Female Awareness Workshop in Liberia.

One of the many topics was

"The role of young Christian women in the Church and society - How can they find their place in the two?"

"Come and see a man who told me all that I ever did" was the honest call of a woman who had a direct encounter with the Master at the Well of Sychar (according to

Then we see the church as the body of believers (including women and men) learning and following Christ's steps so that their own lives may touch the community for positive transformation. Are the women also following Christ? YES. What did Christ do? He preached the Good News to the poor in spirit. He healed the broken-hearted, preached deliverance to captives, recovered the sight of the blind, gave free-

create awareness among female members of their important role in the church. The commission educates young women that leadership in the church is theirs too. Whatever the trend their work may take up, this program is in direct response to the LWF's mandate for increased participation of women at all levels of the church. Thanks to Sister Hawa Kweyeteh, chairperson of the Female Commission for her tireless efforts.



Letter from the WCC Youth Team

Dear Friends,

Greetings from the WCC Youth Team!

We have been contacted by a new organization, S.O.S RIO, working on the challenges related to climate change and global warming. The WCC Youth Team supports S.O.S RIO's concern for the environment and their campaign leading up to the UN KYOTO SUMMIT, 1-10 DECEMBER 1997.

We encourage you to look at the message from S.O.S RIO, and distribute it in your network so enabling other young people to participate in this campaign.

CHRONOLOGY

1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment
— 113 nations met in the first global environmental meeting.
This laid the foundations for the Rio process.

June 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) – the Earth Summit – Rio de Janeiro. This produced five documents: Rio Declaration on Environment and Development; 27 principles; Agenda 21; statement of principles on forests; UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; preliminaries for a Convention on Biological Diversity.

June 1997 New York follow-up conference (Rio-plus-five) — *a complete failure*.

October 1997 Bonn — PrepCom for Kyoto. *Deadlock*.

Therefore all our efforts must now focus on ...

December 1997 Kyoto — The third session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), towards negotiating an international global warming treaty.

Time is short, therefore we ask you to act immediately. Inform your neighbors, friends, schools, religious groups, peace movements, youth organizations in your area. SEND THIS ON TO TWO FRIENDS. Let's act now, before it is too late. . .

You can contact us at:

S.O.S RIO
41 rue de Zurich
1201 Geneva
Switzerland

Tel: +41-22-731-6429
Fax: +41-22-738-9419
email: ipb@gn.apc.org
web: <http://www.itu.ch/ipb/>



S.O.S. RIO!

ACTION — URGENT! — HERE'S WHY...

Five years after Rio*, the optimism which characterized the "Spirit of Rio", coupled with the political will of the world's leaders to fulfil the Earth Summit's objectives, is sadly fading. Greenhouse gas levels in most countries have risen, despite the Rio target of stabilizing carbon dioxide emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2000.

Let us cry out — now, **Five years after Rio**, for our Earth is in a sorry state. Millions are living in poverty, the deserts are spreading, drinking water is ever scarcer, acres of woodland are deforested every day ... and our climate is changing, with dramatic consequences for humans and the environment.

Plans for a treaty to curb global warming, to be negotiated at the Kyoto Summit 1–10 Dec. 1997, now lie in tatters after President Clinton's recent decision to delay cutting greenhouse gas emissions for 20 years, which met with world-wide condemnation. While the European Union wants 7.5% cuts by 2005 and 15% by 2010, and a group of 35 so-called Small Island States want a 20% reduction by that time, the US President, under pressure from the powerful US automobile and mining lobbies, does not propose cuts until 2017. At the same time, President Clinton recognized that the US produces 22% of the world's CO₂ emissions, and that their CO₂ emissions have increased by 8% since 1990. Meanwhile, the United Nations 3,000-strong panel of scientists and climatologists insist that carbon dioxide emissions have to be cut by 60% to avoid severe damage to the earth's environment.

ACTION MUST BE TAKEN NOW, to support the world's leaders in signing a treaty that leads to real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and a real commitment by States to help avert catastrophic climate change. With less than a month to go till the Kyoto conference, maximum pressure must urgently be put on the participants to take the bold measures that are essential. Please join our cry of S.O.S RIO! Help us make this cry heard across the world — both in your own countries, and in Kyoto. Join us and millions of others in expressing our concern for the future of the Earth, for our future, for your future ... a simple action that anyone can do, wherever they are in the world:

SEND A POSTCARD !

In fact, you can buy, or draw, and send three postcards depicting beauties of nature around you that you do not want to see destroyed, to:

- President Clinton, The White House, Washington DC, USA
- your own government
- The President of the third Conference of the Parties, UNFCCC, Kyoto International Conference Hall (KICH), Kyoto, Japan.

with the words

*"The Earth is suffering — Greenhouse gases must be drastically cut
— Governments have to show the way"*

Children should not forget to include their age on the postcards.

***The Earth Summit** (the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development — UNCED) of June 1992 in **Rio de Janeiro**, Brazil, was the first global effort to put a halt to the processes that are threatening our planet, and work out a vast program of action for the 21st century. The Conference made it clear that environment and economic and social development can no longer be seen as isolated fields. *Agenda 21*, a historic document 700 pages long, is a blueprint for how to make development socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. The challenge of the 1990s is to put *Agenda 21* and the other Rio documents — the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* and the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* — into action.



NEWS IN BRIEF

BRAZIL

(lwi)

The Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB), has lodged a complaint against a court judgment concerning the burning of an Indian. In a letter to the Ministry of Justice, the church's Mission Council Among Indians (COMIN), complains about the too lenient sentencing of four young men who set fire to an indigenous leader earlier this year.

A woman judge had amended the sentence from "voluntary manslaughter" to "grievous bodily harm causing death". The victim, Galdino Jesus do Santos, had participated in a National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) meeting in Brasilia. Upon returning to his lodgings in the evening and finding them closed, he lay down at a bus station.

The four perpetrators, young men from prosperous families, had gone out to "have some fun". When they found the sleeping Indian they doused him with inflammable liquid and set him alight. Galdino suffered third-degree burns. He later died in hospital from the wounds. The perpetrators said they had presumed no one would miss him. Several beggars, they said, had been set alight in the streets and no one took any action.

In the case of voluntary manslaughter, the young men could receive prison sentences of between 12 to 34 years. Because of the judge's decision, the maximum penalty was reduced to 12 years, and the young men may get parole.

COMIN coordinator Arteno Spellmeier, said that justice had been sought after Galdino's death. He fears that too lenient a sentence will be no deterrent to some young men from prosperous families.

COMIN requested FUNAI, in its quality of state organization, to exercise pressure to reverse the judge's decision. Two of the defendants are sons of lawyers.

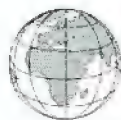
LATVIA

(lwi)

The Luther Academy opened its doors on Sept. 2 in Riga. It is the first institution of higher education in Latvia to prepare pastors for the Lutheran church, according to Archbishop Janis Vanags of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia.

The theological faculty at the University of Latvia is ecumenical, and many of its graduates have no desire to become pastors, Vanags told reporters. The other large denominations in Latvia—Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Baptist—already have their own seminaries.

The Luther Academy, which is yet to be accredited, was developed with financial support from the Lutheran World Federation and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Reinhard Slenczka, 66, was selected to be the academy's rector. Slenczka is a professor of theological sciences. Guntis Kalme, acting director of the new school, told reporters that 13 students are enrolled for the first year of classes at the Luther Academy. Candidates must already have a bachelor's or master's degree to study at the school. The length of study is three years. The teachers are staff of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia and guest lecturers.



SWAZILAND

(lwi)

When a married man dies in Swaziland, the cultural practice is that his brother assumes full responsibility for the family and "inherits" the widow to maintain family unity. The spread of HIV and AIDS across southern Africa has made this a dangerous tradition. Lutheran Development Service (LDS)—the development arm of the Eastern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa—sponsors performances of the stage drama "My Brother's Wife" in rural communities across Swaziland to launch discussions about the epidemic.

In November 1995 the Department for Mission and Development of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) approved a three-year HIV-AIDS awareness project with a total budget of US\$ 14,750 funded by Bread for the World, Germany. Money from this project assists the LDS program in Swaziland.

Swaziland did not acknowledge the threat of AIDS until recently, and it is estimated that 25 percent of the population is now infected with HIV. Projections are that there will be 115,000 "AIDS orphans" in Swaziland by the year 2006.

Stage dramas with a strong anti-AIDS message are used to deliver information on how HIV is transmitted and to open discussions on AIDS-related topics. "We Are Destitute" was performed for two ecumenical women's groups. The drama addresses women's rights and the inheritance laws in Swaziland.

Swaziland's Minister of Education has approved anti-AIDS education in schools and several non-governmental organizations have joined with the Ministries of Health and Education to form a national Anti-AIDS Task Force which includes LDS. In the second half of 1996 a third drama, "Just Once," was performed for six high-school audiences.



USA

(lwi)

Rebecca D. Lawrence, 17, from Chicago has been elected president of the Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). LYO delegates elected Lawrence at their Fourth Triennial Convention which took place in New Orleans July 24-26. The convention voted to establish a Differently Abled Advisory Committee (DAC), to support ecumenism, oppose capital punishment and plan a conference for gay, lesbian and bisexual youth. Workshops and keynote addresses at such a conference are to provide gay, lesbian and bisexual youth with the opportunity to address specific personal and faith issues.

The LYO holds its triennial convention in conjunction with the ELCA Youth Gathering, a gathering that brings together thousands of high-school age Lutherans from across the United States and the Caribbean as well as from other countries around the world. About 30,000 young people attended the fourth triennial Youth Gathering held July 23-27 in New Orleans under the theme, "River of Hope".

Editors note:

The LWF Youth Desk participated in the "Tuesdays" interaction center which set out to engage gathering participants in interactive and experimental displays and activities. LWF Youth Secretary, Ondrej Prostrednik, greeted the LYO delegates with information on the PAYC in Bangkok.

NEWS ON CHILDREN

CANADA

(eni, excerpts)

The United Church of Canada—the nation's biggest Protestant denomination—has filed legal documents in the Supreme Court of British Columbia naming the Government of Canada as ultimately responsible for multiple cases of physical and sexual abuse at native residential schools.

A number of indigenous people who were abused at the schools as children have recently taken action in the civil courts against the government, churches and others. From the mid-1800s to 1969, 80 residential schools for indigenous children were operated on behalf of the federal government by the Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Anglican and United churches. The United Church maintains that it was merely carrying out the government's policy of assimilating indigenous children into non-indigenous society, a policy intended "to educate them out of their Indianness".

In 1990, a prominent native leader in Manitoba revealed that he had been sexually abused in a residential school. After his confession, many other former students from several schools claimed that they too had been sexually and physically abused by school staff. In March 1995, a man who was a dormitory worker from 1948 to 1968 at the Alberni Indian Residential School on British Columbia's Vancouver island was sentenced to 11 years in prison after pleading guilty to 18 sex-related charges. Fifteen former students, all male, have brought a class action suit against the worker, three former principals, the United Church and the government, claiming damages for abuses they suffered as young boys.

The United Church has expressed deep regret and sorrow to the First Nations of Canada for the injustices that occurred as a result of the Native Residential School System.

CHILD LABOR

The International Labor Organization (ILO) is drafting a new convention on the most hazardous forms of child labor. Governments, NGO's and UN agencies have met in India, Colombia and Amsterdam to discuss the new convention...and they will meet again in Oslo later this year. Child worker organizations also have participated in many of these discussions. In 1998, organizations throughout the world will march against child labor.

INITIATIVES AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

August 1997 was the anniversary of the Stockholm Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and the adoption of the Agenda for Action by many governments. Follow-up on the congress is underway.





INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CHILD LABOR

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway, the International Labor Organization (ILO) and UNICEF organized three regional consultations in Brazil, Pakistan and South Africa in preparation for the International Conference on Child Labor held in Norway 27-30 October 1997. In addition, the International Save the Children Alliance prepared a regional meeting in Thailand to follow up the Amsterdam Conference and make recommendations to the Oslo conference.

BANGKOK

Edited and distributed by HURINet, the human rights information network, this article has been excerpted and shared with readers for educational purposes only.

Children from Southeast and Northeast Asian countries called for an end to child prostitution and military service. Some 12 children told a conference ...aimed at stamping out "intolerable" child labor practices prevalent across the region that prostitution and military service for minors had to be stamped out immediately. "We think these tasks are unacceptable because they are dangerous for our health and well-being," the group of youngsters told the opening session of a three-day conference. The meeting was organized to define and outline measures for tackling so-called "intolerable" forms of child labor in Southeast Asian, East Asian and Pacific region countries. At least 120 million children between the ages of five and 14 across the globe are in full-time work, while up to 130 million have part-time jobs, International Labor Organization

(ILO) figures presented to the meeting showed.

More than 60 percent of the full-time child workers are in Asia, the worst affected region of the world, where up to 50 percent of youngsters are breadwinners in some countries. The results of the regional conference were put to the International Conference on Child Labor, the key gathering on the thorny subject, held in Oslo in October.

THE GREAT PLAGUE OF 1997

Excerpts from an article by W. E. Glaser. Edited and distributed by HURINet, the Human Rights Information Network.

Imagine a society afflicted by a scourge which struck down a quarter of its daughters and up to one in eight of its sons. Imagine also that this plague, while not immediately fatal, lurked in the bodies and minds of these young children for decades, making them up to 16 times more likely to experience its disastrous long-term effects. Finally, imagine the nature of these effects: life-threatening starvation, suicide, persistent nightmares, drug and alcohol abuse and a whole host of intractable psychiatric disorders requiring life-long treatment. What should that society's response be? The scourge that we are speaking of is child sexual abuse. It has accounted for probably more misery and suffering than any of the great plagues of history, including the bubonic plague, tuberculosis and syphilis. Its effects are certainly more devastating and widespread than those of the modern-day epidemics which currently take up so much community attention and resources: motor vehicle accidents, heart disease and, now, AIDS.

Yet the public response to child sexual abuse, even now, is fragmented, poorly coordinated and generally ill-informed. Its victims have no National AIDS Council to advise governments on policy and research issues. They have no National Heart Foundation to promote public education as to the risks of smoking and unhealthy lifestyles. They do not have a Transport Accident Commission to provide comprehensive treatment and rehabilitation services for them. A massive public health problem like child sexual abuse demands a massive societal response. But firstly, we need to acknowledge and understand the problem itself, and this is, sadly enough, a task which both professionals and the community have been reluctant to undertake, despite the glaringly obvious evidence in front of us. Until very recently, our professional ignorance regarding child sexual abuse was profound. The reasons for this state of affairs are complex and arise from a combination of entrenched patriarchal values, child (and woman) hatred disguised as pseudo-science and misguided sexual liberationism. However, the denial cannot continue.





EVENTS IN 1997/1998

1 December 1997

WORLD AIDS DAY is the culmination point of an annual campaign observed on Dec. 1 each year to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS worldwide and stimulate appropriate action. It is a day of compassion for people living with HIV/AIDS and of remembrance of those who have died from AIDS. The theme of the 1997 World AIDS Campaign is *Children Living in a World with AIDS*. The focus is on every human being under the age of 18 years, in line with the definition of children set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The 1997 campaign theme will overlap with that of the 1998 campaign which will focus on the concerns of young people (15-24 years).

31 December-4 January 1998



1997/1998 National Gathering for Lutheran University and College Students in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the Lutheran Student Movement (LSM)-USA. Theme: *Free For All - A Capitol Celebration of Democracy & Grace*. This gathering will celebrate the LSM's 75th anniversary. A Holocaust Memorial Museum trip on the program is scheduled as a reminder that freedom is not a given state. The program also includes LSM-USA annual legislative meetings.

15-22 March 1998

Training Ecumenical Trainers in Europe (TETE) is a training program for young European people involved in the ecumenical movement who are willing to increase ecumenical activities at a national level. The TETE is organized by the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe (EYCE) in cooperation with the European Youth Center. The TETE will take place in the European Youth Center, Budapest, Hungary.

22-25 May 1998

Come to the Feast is an ecumenical young adult ministry training event for young adult leaders, laypersons or clergy of any age who work with young adults, and anyone concerned with young adult ministry. The event, which will take place in Atlanta, USA, will give participants a chance to share ideas for ministry, define ecumenical partnerships, learn practical skills, have fun and make new friends.

Summer 1998

RAFIKI Youth Exchange program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT). The exchange will include three participants and one team leader from the ELCIC and four members of the ELCT spending approximately four weeks in Tanzania, returning to Canada for the final phase, including participation in the *On This Rock* - Canadian Lutheran Youth Gathering in Halifax, Nova Scotia, 23-26 July 1998.

11-18 July 1998

European Ecumenical Youth Gathering of the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe (EYCE) in Wildhaus, Switzerland. Theme: *Open Your Doors*. There will be 150 participants, 18 to 30 years of age from all over Europe, from various cultural backgrounds and different churches. Participants also will have the opportunity to take part in one of the various pre-events, in work camps and exposure programs in different parts of Switzerland.



Letters to the Editors

I got a copy of your LWF *Youth* magazine from one of your readers. I'm very interested in it and it helped me a lot, especially concerning information about youth issues on world-wide matters. So I would like to get in touch with your *Youth* magazine in the future.

Misganaw Gebeyehu, Ethiopia

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

I greet everyone of you in the name of Jesus our Lord and Savior. Thank you very much for your *Youth* magazine. It is No. 41/97 which has the following theme on the cover page: "Fleeing toward the future." Let God bless you! Let God give you courage and wisdom in taking care of refugees and uprooted people. I wish I could help, but God knows that I don't have a job. Do please pray that I may get a job and help.

Tezera Wolde Medhin, Ethiopia

Youth magazine No. 41 spoke to me in a special way, as far as our ministry is concerned. I have seen how many people including children and youth have been innocently suffering and dying painfully in their own land or outside their countries. This was the first time I read *Youth* magazine from cover to cover all at once. I thank God for what the UNHCR and LWF are doing in helping such people as far as food, shelter, medicines and education is concerned. Please keep on informing youth about such touchy issues as neglected children, and their future, the side effects of abortion, testimonies of drug addicts who came to know Christ, etc.

Douglas T.B. Mmari, executive chairperson of Hope Ministries, Tanzania

Today's mail brought the LWF June 1997 *Youth* magazines, both for our office and Dijana Cercic*. We are so pleased to have had the opportunity to share from our LIRS network. What a wonderful issue! I so enjoy the special way you present the LWF and its work in your magazine. As you may know, many of us in the United States lack international experience. To some, "being international" seems rather abstract and far away. Publications like your *Youth* magazine really help to draw us into the circle of care and bringing people of the world closer together.

Thank you so much for your fine work!

*Lily Wu, manager for promotion and editorial services
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS)*

* Cercic wrote one of the contributions to the magazine.



Letter to the Editors

I greet the LWF staff all in the name of the Highmost God and I pray for blessings upon your lives so that you can continue with the good work that you are doing, works of charity all over the world to the needy and also what you are doing to encourage Lutherans all over the world to come together in communion and not only Lutherans but the universal Christian church.

Actually I wanted to say thank you for the well organized Pre-Assembly Youth Conference held in Bangkok, Thailand. I really thank God for making it possible for me to be one of the participants and I believe it was for a purpose that young people met in this manner in the name of the Lord. We gained a lot from this. Had it not been for this conference, I wouldn't have known people like Grace, Paitoon, or Jie Sung Lee.... Like any other participant who was there, I wish there could be more international youth gatherings of this kind. This is where we learn to accept each other as we conceptualize our differences, especially cultural differences, as the diversity of the mighty handiwork of our Creator, God himself, and become a well-informed international community.

Now, turning to the participants, I hope you all arrived safely home at your respective destinations and that you are also still safe under the protection of God. I am taking it for granted that you are still holding fast to your profession and the high calling to salvation. Let's continue sharing our experiences in the Lord and God will surely lift you up. God bless you all. Thanks.

Mothusi Andrew Maripe, Botswana

Looking for a Pen Pal?

Dear Friends!

SINCE SEVERAL YEARS THE LWF YOUTH MAGAZINE HAS TRIED TO CONNECT YOUNG LUTHERANS FROM DIFFERENT CORNERS OF THE WORLD BY PUBLISHING THE "PEN PAL" REQUESTS. WE ARE GETTING MORE AND MORE LETTERS FROM PEOPLE LOOKING FOR PEN PALS WHO WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THEIR ADDRESSES PUBLISHED. TO DECIDE HOW MUCH ROOM SHOULD BE GIVEN TO "PEN PALS" IN THE MAGAZINE, WE'D LIKE TO ASK YOU A FAVOR:

WOULD THOSE OF YOU WHO WERE ABLE TO FIND A FRIEND THROUGH THIS SERVICE WRITE A SHORT NOTE TO US?

MAYBE YOU HAVE A SPECIAL STORY TO SHARE?

THE NUMBER OF REPLIES WILL HELP US DETERMINE THE FUTURE OF THE "PEN PALS" PAGE. THE MOST INTERESTING ONES WILL BE PUBLISHED IN OUR NEXT ISSUE.

THANKS FOR YOUR COOPERATION!



I am looking forward to a pen pal from Switzerland or any other country in the world. I am a Malawian boy aged 22. My hobbies are: reading the Bible, drama and exchanging gifts. I reply to letters in English only.

Mr. Jonathan M. WASI
P.O. Box 60
Mibowi, Malawi

I am looking for a pen pal.

Eklu. M. JAFFESON
Abor Secondary School
P.O. Box 17
Abor, Ghana

I am interested in having pen pals from any part of the world and I would be very happy if you publish my name in your magazine. I am a girl of 19 years of age and my hobbies are Bible reading, writing letters, making friends, traveling, listening to all kinds of music, exchanging gifts and photos. I would reply to letters in English.

Dinah Korkor MENSAH
St. John's Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 474
Takoradi, Ghana

I want to have pen pal friends from Switzerland, Finland, Ireland, Sweden or any other country. I am a 19-year-old young man.

Mesfin EJIGU
North Wollo, Wurgessa Postal Agent
Wurgessa, Ethiopia

I am a girl aged 20 and I am a member of the Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe. I would like to have pen pals from anywhere in the world. My hobbies are going to church, reading novels, watching TV, visiting friends, making new friends and reading the Bible.

Olipah DUBE
House No. 1002
Phelandaba T/S, Jahunda
Gwanda, Zimbabwe

I am 24 years of age and a second-year college student majoring in English. I am very, very interested in communicating with young people from Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Romania and New Zealand. I am especially interested in corresponding with college and university students. My hobbies are: reading, playing football, watching TV, spiritual singing, classical music, going out for recreation, exchanging photographs, collecting stamps, going to church on Sundays and attending youth meetings. I would be very happy to correspond with young people of both sexes and from any religion.

Tessema MOLLORO
c/o Sr. Catherine Gaynor
ECS, P.O. Box 2454
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia



I am looking for a pen pal from any nation. I am 24 years old, male, single and the founder and director of the "Hope for Rural Children & Orphans". My hobbies are reading the Holy Bible and spiritual books, besides helping poor and persecuted persons. I reply to letters in English, French, German and about twelve tribal languages if in Ethiopia.

Getachew L. YEMANE
P.O. Box 14225
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

I am a young man of 27 in the software profession and with earlier jobs in an institute of technology, a hospital, social development and an international marketing organization. Reading, writing articles and involvement in audio-visual Christian media are my interests. Youngsters with similar heartbeats to respond on issues of tomorrow's world can kindly correspond in English to:

D. Anand Prabu MANUEL
29 Hunters Rd., Choolai
IN-600 112 Chennai, India

I am a student assisted by the Lutheran World Federation and am very, very interested in getting acquainted with some pen pals.

Yimam Kebede DAMTE
Worgessa, Wollo Province
Wollo, Ethiopia

I would like a pen friend from anywhere in the world. I like reading, swimming and listening to soft classical music. I am a male university student of 23 years of age. I would happily reply to letters from a female aged 18-20.

Mr. Yadeta ADEBA
Alemayo University of Agriculture
P.O. Box 138
Dire Dawa, Ethiopia

I would like to have pen pals. I am a 23-year-old man and I am working at a hospital in Ethiopia, called the Aira Hospital. I am very much interested in writing and receiving letters, reading spiritual magazines and books. Please introduce my address to all who would like to know something about me and also share something about themselves.

Yoseph SHIFERAW
Aira Hospital, P.O. Box 11599
West Wollega, Ethiopia

I'm a 21-year-old Ethiopian female. I would like to have a pen pal of either sex from USA, Canada, Norway, Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark and Japan. My hobbies are reading, exchanging ideas, gifts and photos, reading the Bible and singing spiritual songs. I reply to letters in English.

Tsion DERESSE
P.O. Box 34214
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



THE BANK ACCOUNTS BELOW
MAY BE USED FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO YOUTH MAGAZINE

SWISS FRANCS:

Banque Edouard Constant
Cours de Rive 11
Case postale 3754
CH-1211 Geneva 3
Switzerland
Account: 620033.001.0.11

DEUTSCH MARKS:

Schroeder Münschmeyer Hengst & Co.
Friedensstr. 6-10
DE-60311 Frankfurt a. M., Germany
or Postfach 10 20 42
DE-60020 Frankfurt a. M., Germany
BLZ (branch code) 502 200 85
Account: 00-843 037-00

DOLLARS:

International Agencies Banking
Chase Manhattan Bank
270 Park Ave. 43rd. Floor
New York, N.Y. 10017, USA
Account: 949-2-417390

SWEDISH CROWNS:

Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken
S-106-40 Stockholm
Sweden
Account: 99 5277-10 002 61

*When making a payment to one of the above accounts,
it is important to indicate the following:*

"TO YOUTH PUBLICATIONS Account No. 322006"

Please cut here

ADDRESS UPDATE FORM

The Lutheran World Federation
Department for Mission & Development
Youth in Church & Society
P.O. Box 2100, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland

Name:

Old address:

.....
.....

Please attach old address label if possible (or the number indicated thereon)

New/current Address:

.....
.....

Please write legibly. Thank you!



PUBLICATIONS

AVAILABLE FROM THE YOUTH DESK

1. Report on the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference in Bangkok, Thailand, June 29-July 5, 1997 – *in English* – will be available in January 1998, other languages will follow.
2. “Young Women Leaders – From Vision to Reality” an Evaluation and Report on the LWF Three-Year Leadership Training Program for Younger Women 1994-97 – *in English*
3. Report on Youth HIV/AIDS Workshop in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, May 17-21, 1996 – *in English*
4. “Building Bridges: Towards an Asian Solidarity” – report from the Asian Lutheran Youth Conference in the Philippines, May 1995 – *in English*
5. HIV/AIDS brochure, produced by the HIV/AIDS Workshop in Windhoek, Namibia, May 1993 (jointly organized by the World Council of Churches (WCC) Youth Team and LWF Youth in Church and Society) – *in English, German, French, Portuguese and Spanish*
6. Resource book on HIV/AIDS (published jointly by the WCC Youth Team and LWF Youth Desk)
 - Making Connections – Facing AIDS – *in English*
 - Face au SIDA – créons des liens solidaires – *en français*
 - Hagamos Frente al SIDA – creemos lazos de solidaridad – *en castellano*
7. LWF Pre-Council Workshop, Representation of Youth in the Nordic Churches, Kristiansand, Norway, 1993 – *in English*
8. “It is good for us to be here”/”Wir freuen uns, hier zu sein” – report/Bericht, Youth Conference/Jugendkonferenz, Budapest, Hungary/Ungarn, 1993 – *in English/auf Deutsch*
9. Copies of *Youth* magazine nos. 40 and 41

Turn to God - Rejoice in Hope!



~ WCC 8th Assembly ~ Harare, Zimbabwe ~ 3-14 December, 1998 ~

Attention Youth, Ages 18 - 30!

The WCC Youth Team is collecting **DISPLAY ITEMS** and **POETRY** for presentation at the 8th Assembly. Please note the guidelines below, and send your submissions to the following address, no later than 31 May, 1998.

WCC Youth Team (Padare)
150 Route de Ferney
P.O. Box 2100
1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland



Display Material should reflect youth activity in the ecumenical movement. Please send posters, pamphlets, photographs, small art work, etc. Include a short description with each item.

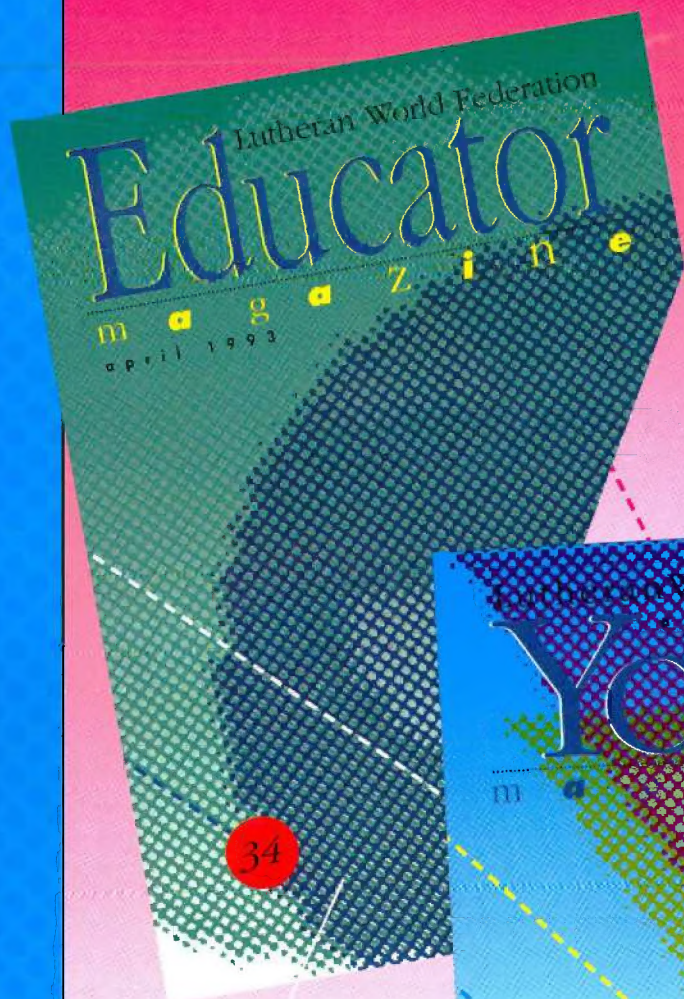


Poetry submissions should address the theme of "Inclusive Communities?" (How do young people relate to the power structures of church and society? How do these structures respond to the youth in their midst?) Poetry may be submitted in any language. Please include, as well, a symbol to accompany your poem (symbols could be images, objects, etc.). Selected poetry will be read at the Assembly.

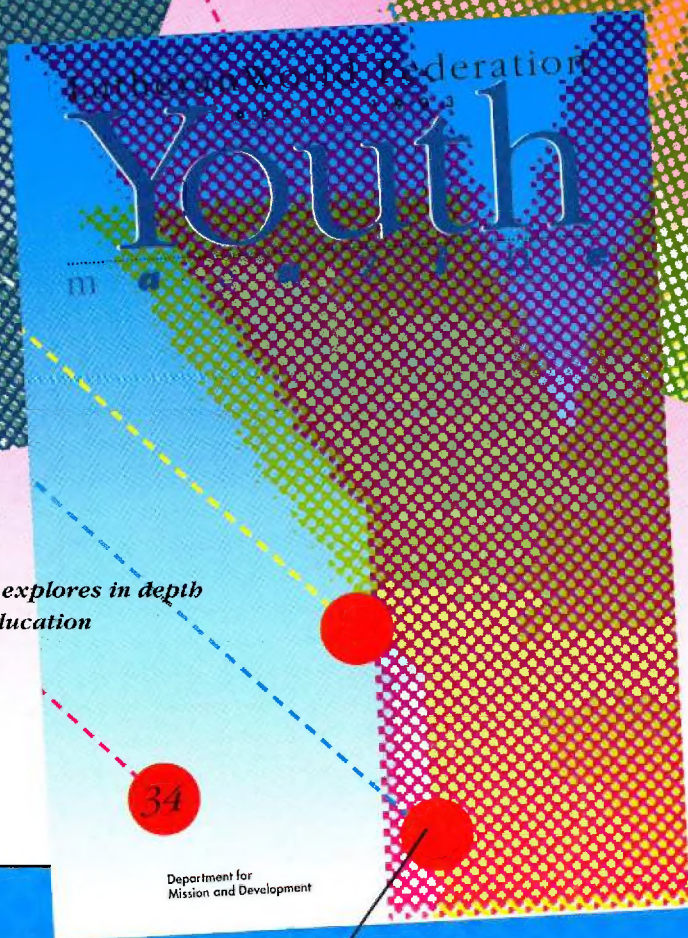
****Please note:** Not all submissions will be selected for presentation. Articles submitted cannot be returned. Please address any questions to Liisa Gue, phone: (41-22) 791 62 89, fax: (41-22) 7910361, e-mail: gue@wcc-coe.org.

Also available from the Department for Mission and Development

Women: A magazine that connects you to today's world and the concerns for women: WOMEN challenging the church to bear and act.



Educator: A periodical that explores in depth current topics of Christian Education for LWF EDUCATORS.



A publication with articles, news and interviews on youth concerns about social, political and religious issues.

Interested? Lutheran World Federation

Contact! Department for Mission and Development

150, route de Ferney

P.O. Box 2100

1211 Geneva 2 Switzerland